



■ † Cheesefare Sunday

The Day of Forgiveness The Earth Merges With Heaven *

Epistle (Romans 13:11-14:4)

Brethren, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Gospel (St. Matthew 6: 14-21)

The Lord said: if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that

thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father Who is in secret; and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.



For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (St. Matthew 6:14–15).

What a simple and handy means of salvation! Your trespasses are forgiven under the condition that you forgive the trespasses of your neighbor against you. This means that you are in your own hands.

Force yourself to pass from agitated feelings toward your brother to truly peaceful feelings—and that is all.

The day of forgiveness: what a great, heavenly day of God this is!

If all of us only made use of it as we ought, this day would turn Christian societies into heavenly societies, and the earth would merge with heaven.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*.