

## FORGIVENESS IS LOVE PERFECTED

*Wayne Rodgers*

I love studying the book of First John. For in it, we see a correlation between the love of God and the love we are to have for our brethren. In chapter four, John wrote: *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us”* (1 John 4:7-12).

He has shown His love, *“he loved us, and sent his Son...for our sins”* (v. 10). The apostle Paul would say to the Romans, *“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). Conditioned by our *“walking in the light”* (v. 7), He shows His love to us by a continued forgiveness of sins, as stated by John: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). The idea of forgiveness is one that is pleasing to the spiritual and emotional side of man. Obviously, the spiritual side of man is pleased because his soul has been cleansed from sin, and the emotional side of man is pleased to know and have assurance that he has been forgiven of the sin against him and the guilt which it has brought. Therefore, He now treats us as righteous.

The love for our brethren is to be shown as well. John writes, *“If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another”* (4:11). This is the same type of love that God had for us, which brings about forgiveness. Only true love can allow one to forgive a wrong done against them and let it be as if it has never happened. This is the idea of true forgiveness. Our relationships with our brethren are so important for the work of Christ. John writes in his gospel, *“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:34, 35). This love is to be a recognizable trait in the body of Christ to the world around us. If we are living righteously, then we will show love to one another causing us to forgive one another as God has forgiven us. *“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses”* (Matt. 18:35).

We can have assurance of eternal salvation in Christ Jesus, if we meet these conditions: being born of God (5:1), walking in the light (1:7), doing His commands (2:3), loving God and loving our brethren (4:20-21). The apostle Peter stated it very simply: *“...Love the brotherhood...”* (1 Peter 2:17). Let us remember the correlation between the love of God and our love to one another.

