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## Christian Love and Segregation

S. E. Rogers

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### Recommended Citation

Rogers, S. E., "Christian Love and Segregation" (1900). *Pamphlets and Broadsides*. 9.  
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Mississippi. Segregation

11-13-56

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# **Christian Love and Segregation**

by

**S. E. ROGERS**

(An excerpt from an address delivered  
before the Manning (S.C.) Lions Club)

**THE ASSOCIATION OF  
CITIZENS' COUNCILS OF SOUTH  
CAROLINA**

**SUMMERTON, S. C.**



# CHRISTIAN LOVE AND SEGREGATION

THE ATTITUDE, words and actions of those in high places in our churches have been a source of concern to many of us, who believe in, and are committed to, the maintenance of the segregation of the races in the South. For these church leaders to state positively and categorically that segregation and Christian love are incompatible, and for them to be able to cite the Scriptures—Book, Chapter and Verse—to apparently prove their point is most disconcerting.

FRANKLY, it was to me. I was well enough versed in the beginnings of Socialism under Marx and Engels, (who purposely gave the movement a religious base on the concepts of "the brotherhood of man" and "social justice," in order to produce a classless society with the State substituted for God), to understand how many sincere churchmen could easily confuse socialism with religion, and to know that many have done just that. I could also understand why, once confused, these church leaders desire to immediately translate their socialized Christianity into social action; tho, I must confess, that I am still unable to understand their callings upon the power of the State to enforce compliance with their beliefs—a principle far removed from the teachings of Christ and more in keeping with the tenets of the Middle Ages.

HOWEVER, it was not until I went to the New Testament in the original Greek that I discovered how wrong our churchmen are in preaching to us that Christian love requires us to give up the principles of segregation on which our bi-racial society is founded. Incidentally, I also found why the great and learned churchmen in the days of our forefathers had not discovered what our modern ministers have found. The min-



isters to our forefathers had the Bible, but not Socialism; and for them segregation was compatible with Christianity. Our modern ministers have the Bible and Socialism; and for them segregation is incompatible with Christianity. The only difference is Socialism. The Bible hasn't changed; and, if Socialism is omitted, segregation and Christianity are still compatible.

SO ENGROSSED, or confused, have our modern ministers been in the principles of Socialism, that they have not reviewed—or, at least, have not told us about it, if they have the principles of Christian love as set forth in the original Greek in which the New Testament was written.

IF THEY HAVE made such a review, in all fairness, they should have told us that there are two words for love used in the original Greek New Testament. Transliterating the first of the principal parts of the verbs (and using them hereafter), they are **agapao** and **fileo**. In the King James version, with which we are most familiar, they are both translated as love. But what a difference in meaning. **Agapao** denotes the love of reason, of esteem, of respect. **Fileo** denotes the love of feeling, of affection. Throughout the New Testament, the word that is used to express God's love to man, man's love to God, and the love of Christians for each other is **agapao**—respect, esteem. Jesus brought out the distinction when, speaking of His relationship to God in John 5:20, He said, "For the Father loveth (**fileo**) the Son"; but when he speaks of man's love for Christ (John 8:42) He says, "If God were your father, ye would love (**agapao**) me."

ON OCCASION Paul seems to confuse **agapao** and **fileo**, but on the whole, he maintains the distinction clearly. In Romans 12:10, he says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love (**fileo**)"; but in the preceding verse 9, he makes it abundantly clear that the love he has



reference to is **agapao**. Again in I Corinthians 16:22, he writes, "If any man love (fileo) not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed," but two verses below (verse 24), in speaking of Christian love for other Christians, he says, "My love (agapao) be with you in Christ Jesus."

WHEN THE new commandment is given in Matthew 22:37-41, in Mark 12:32-33, and in Luke 6:26-32, the love for God and for our neighbor is **agapao**. When Christ says, (John 15:17) "These things I command you, that ye love one another," the word used is **agapao**. And when Paul says, in Galatians 5:22, that "The fruit of the Spirit is love," he uses **agapao**.

I never understood before why Christ in John 21:15-17 asked Peter three times, "Lovest Thou Me?" The first time he asked him "Lovest (agapao) thou me more than these?" Peter sidestepped the question and answered, "Yes, Lord, Thou knowest that I love (fileo) thee." Again Jesus insisted upon **agapao**, but Peter answered fileo and on the third time Jesus adopted the affectionate fileo, but warned Peter of his stubbornness and told him that the day would come when he could not do as he pleased, but would be carried by others where he would not go.

CHRISTIAN LOVE, then, is the love of reason, of respect, of esteem, and such love is completely compatible with a segregated society. It is far different from the love of feeling and affection upon which an integrated society would be based, and from which relationships calling for such love would naturally flow.

I CAN **agapao** the Negro, I can respect him. He can merit my esteem. We can be one in Jesus Christ in our mutual respect and esteem for Christ and for each other. However, I cannot fileo him, nor do I want him to fileo me; nor do I want the relationship existing between him and me that filial love implies; and neither Christ nor Christianity requires such love.