

## The “Grace-Unity” Error It Contradicts The Bible by Casey Head

There is a false doctrine penetrating local churches of Christ throughout this country, and its effects are destroying faithful churches. It is the doctrine called “grace-unity.” In this series of articles, we are going to show the error of this pervasive teaching so that you might be better prepared to cast it down when the time comes, if it hasn’t already.

First of all, let us define the grace-unity doctrine. Its basic premise is that we should overlook certain doctrinal error in an effort to establish “unity in diversity.” To illustrate, if a preacher begins teaching the “mental divorce” position, we should overlook his error and maintain fellowship with him- even if we disagree. Countless examples could be provided to illustrate the grace-unity doctrine, but surely you get the point. Is this doctrine scriptural? Of course not.

The point of this first article is to show that the grace-unity doctrine plainly contradicts the teachings of the word of God. In the Bible, we are told NOT to tolerate *doctrinal* error. Jesus didn’t tolerate false teaching, as we see in Matthew 16:6-12. He told His apostles in verse six, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees,” and then in verse twelve, “Then understood they how that He (Christ) bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*” Did Jesus tell His apostles to accept the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Did He encourage them to strive for “unity in diversity?” Not at all. The key word in this passage is “beware.”

After the church was established, there were several instances where falsehood was taught. In each instance, it was addressed...not tolerated. In Acts 15, for example, certain Judaizing teachers came from Jerusalem to Antioch teaching “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” Paul and Barnabas did not look the other way, nor did they greet these false teachers warmly. Rather, it says in verse two, “When therefore Paul and Barnabas *has no small dissension and disputation* with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.” In the same chapter, we find Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James all standing up for the truth, and as a result of their efforts, the falsehood was cast down. Likewise, in Acts 18:24-26, we find a man named Apollos who was “an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures.” Despite his obvious talent, he knew and taught only the baptism of John. As a result of this error, Aquila and Priscilla took him aside, and it says in verse 26 that they “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” In both of these examples, some false teaching arose; and in both examples, it was corrected, not tolerated.

Again, it says in Romans 16:17-18, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses *contrary to the doctrine* which ye have learned; *and avoid them.* For they that are such *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ*, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Paul instructed the Romans to avoid those who perverted the doctrine of Christ. Those who promote the grace-unity doctrine would say the opposite.

Many other passages make this same point. We are told in Colossians 2:8, “*Beware* lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” The apostle says in 1 Timothy 6:3-5, “If any teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...from such withdraw thyself.” In 2 Timothy 2:16-18, false doctrines are said to be “foolish and vain babblings” and they cause the faith of some Christians to be overthrown. We are told here to SHUN that which is false. Finally, we are to use the word of God to rebuke others and cast down error (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 4:2).

Many other passages and principles could be considered, but these few should suffice. As you can see, the grace-unity doctrine is unscriptural, as it contradicts the plain teachings of God’s word. Let us hold firm to the unadulterated gospel of Christ and cast down error when it arises.