

REVIEW OF A. B. CANEDAY'S "'LEST AFTER PREACHING TO OTHERS I BECOME DISQUALIFIED': GRACE AND WARNING IN PAUL'S GOSPEL (1 CORINTHIANS 9:23-27)"¹

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Introduction

Though published several years ago, I just became aware of this article by reading a blog Caneday posted about me in which he cited this article.

This is a long article, thirty-two pages, including seventy-one footnotes in very small font. I was very interested to see what Caneday had to say about this very important passage. Unfortunately, after reading this article, I came away very much disappointed. After reading it I still do not know much about what he thinks about the passage. Possibly the fault is my own inability to understand. However, I suspect the fault is in the presentation.

The Outline Suggests This Is a Survey Article

Aside from the introduction and conclusion, there is but one point to the outline: "Competing Interpretations of 1 Corinthians 9:27." In light of that fact, that might have been a better title for the article. Caneday's aim, based on the outline, is not to explain the passage, but to explain various interpretations of it.

Caneday suggests three views: the loss of eternal salvation view, the extra-salvation loss view (yes, that is the way he labels it), and the means of salvation view, which is his view. He subdivides the second view into three sub-views: the loss of eternal rewards view, the loss of testimony for the gospel view, and the loss of divine approval of apostleship view.

Caneday's outline does not accurately reflect what he is trying to do. He tells us his purpose in the introduction:

I seek to demonstrate that if we properly understand the apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:27, we will recognize that his [sic] passage functions to cause himself first but also every believer lest we presume that God's grace, which we

proclaim in the gospel, will save us despite failing to bring our own bodies into subjection to the holy requirements of the good news which we preach and believe (p. 2).

Admittedly that is a long and convoluted sentence that fails to state explicitly what Paul wanted to cause himself and his readers to do. However, we might summarize what he is saying as follows: *In 1 Cor 9:27 Paul warns all believers, including himself, that we must persevere in faith and good works to the end of our lives in order to avoid eternal condemnation.*

He then gives a caveat:

We will understand that Paul administers this warning to himself and to us without simultaneously calling upon us to doubt that God will preserve us, his children, safely to the end but might relinquish his grasp upon us with the result that we will perish in the Last Day. Instead of subverting his own and *our confident assurance* that God, who has begun his work of redeeming grace in us, will preserve us in his grace to the end, Paul's warning is wholly compatible with his affirmations of confidence in God's preserving his own people unto final salvation (pp. 2-3, italics added).

Once again, those sentences are long and hard to follow. Yet his overall point is clear enough: *Though Paul is warning us that we will be eternally condemned if we do not persevere in faith and good works, that warning is not in any way to cause us to question that we will indeed persevere and obtain final salvation.*

Thus the article might have been titled something like *Believers Must Persevere to Avoid Condemnation Yet We Should Be Assured We Will Persevere*, or *Perseverance Needed but Assurance Possible*, or *The Relationship between Perseverance and Assurance of Final Salvation*. Caneday is merely using the various views of the passage as a means to achieve his purpose of exposing the need for, and assurance of, perseverance.

It should be noted that if the warning is an actual warning and not a hypothetical one, then one cannot possibly be assured that he will not be eternally condemned. It is theological doublespeak to say that Paul is warning himself and his readers that they might be eternally condemned, yet this should not cause them to lack assurance that they will obtain final salvation. That is a non sequitur. If the warning is real, then assurance is impossible.

Caneday himself says a few sentences later in the introduction that our obtaining of everlasting life is not certain:

If we do not run faithfully, we will fail to attain unto the prize, the eternal wreath of life everlasting...The gospel requires faithful endurance from us in order that we might lay hold of salvation in the age to come (p. 3).

Thus whatever he means by "confident assurance," he doesn't mean *certainty*. Later in the article (p. 28) he compares our assurance that we will not fall away with a rock climber's confidence that he will not fall. No one thinks that a rock climber is certain he will never fall. Falling is part of rock climbing. And falling is certainly a possibility in the Christian life.

Exegetical Observations and Comments by Caneday Are Few

There are seventy-two words in the Greek text of 1 Cor 9:23-27, the passage about which Caneday is writing. Yet few of these words receive attention or comment by Caneday.

This is an exegetical journal article. Indeed it is one in which Caneday criticizes others (especially Zane Hodges and me) for their poor exegesis (see pp. 6-15). Concerning the loss of rewards view he says,

Their exegetical comments tend to be brief, laconic,² void of exegetical development, lacking in theological adeptness and even-handedness, but at the same time they tend to be conveyed in an *ipso facto* manner, with an air of authority and finality incommensurate with supporting evidence and argument (p. 10).

One reason why scholars rarely make such statements is that they realize their own writings will then be judged by that standard.

His comments *about the text* are brief, something he criticizes. Indeed, it is hard to find any detailed discussion about the text or the words of the text. Rather, Caneday launches off into theological or practical discussions without having shown that his interpretation is indeed true.

(Anyone reading the article will note that his comments in general are verbose. He loves long and convoluted sentences. However, when it comes to comments *about words or phrases in the text*, he is quite brief.)

Precisely what he means by "void of exegetical development" is not clear. But in his own article there are so few exegetical comments, one wonders how he could consider his article to be characterized by "exegetical development."

Is his article "lacking in theological adeptness"? Well, I suppose that depends on your point of view. From my perspective his article is filled with doublespeak and internal contradictions. But I urge you to read his article carefully to make your own decision.

Is his article "even-handed"? Since only my view receives his scorn and pejorative comments, and since he mentions me by name as being an example of one whose writings are devoid of exegetical development and lacking in theological adeptness, I might not be an unbiased judge. However, only in the one subsection of the paper dealing with the loss of eternal rewards view does he become bombastic. In the rest of the article his tone toward those with whom he disagrees is noticeably irenic. I would say he is far from being "even-handed" in this article, but again, I urge you to judge for yourself.

Does Caneday deliver his conclusions in an *ipso facto manner* without providing evidence to prove his statements? I believe he does that repeatedly throughout this article. But I invite you to read it and decide for yourself.

It strikes me that Caneday has criticized others for things of which he is guilty (Matt 7:3).

There are almost no exegetical comments by the author at all in the first nineteen pages. That is quite striking in an exegetical paper. Since he is evaluating various views in the first nineteen pages, he should make exegetical statements to prove his points. Yet the main exegesis found in the first nineteen pages are the views of others, not of Caneday himself. Caneday dismisses the views with which he disagrees primarily with the wave of the hand and without any word studies, grammatical studies, contextual consideration, or references to other texts in Paul or the rest of the NT. I did find one place where Caneday makes a few grammatical observations to defend his view of the meaning of *sunkoinōnos autou* (lit. *sharer with it*) in 1 Cor 9:23 (p. 18). Unfortunately, such comments are exceedingly rare in this paper.

Even starting on p. 20 when Caneday begins to defend his own view, there is very little in the way of exegesis. When he begins explaining and defending his own view, what we find are what could rightly be called statements "conveyed in an *ipso facto* manner, with an air of authority and finality incommensurate with supporting evidence and argument." For example, he writes, "By 'fellow partaker of the gospel' (*sunkoinōnos autou*), Paul means a fellow participant in the gospel with those whom he saved through the proclamation of the good news" (p. 20). And what does he believe that means? He concludes that paragraph with this sentence: "This continual need of faithfulness that he might be saved in the Day of Judgment is the burden of his reasoning throughout 1 Corinthians 9" (p. 21). In other words, in 1 Cor 9:23 by *fellow partaker of the gospel* Paul meant that through his work for Christ he hoped to avoid eternal condemnation. The issue for Caneday is not ruling with Christ and eternal rewards, but getting into the Kingdom and avoiding hell.

Now what proof does he cite to prove his understanding that in v 23 Paul was expressing his hope that he might finally receive the benefit of the gospel's saving power? None. He does not cite other uses of *koinōnos* or *koinōnia* or *koinōneō* in Paul or elsewhere. He does not cite other uses of *sunkoinōnos* or *sunkoinōneō* in Paul or in the NT. He doesn't discuss whether this entire expression, "fellow partaker of the gospel," occurs elsewhere.

Why not discuss Phil 1:5 where the very similar expression "I thank God...for your fellowship in the gospel" (*epi tē koinōnia humōn eis to euangelion*) occurs? Of course in Phil 1:5 the issue is the financial participation of the Philippian church in Paul's gospel ministry. Or why not discuss Phil 4:15-16 where *koinoneō* (to share or partake) and *euangelion* (gospel) both are used in the statement,

Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of *the gospel*, when I departed from Macedonia, no church *shared* with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities (emphasis added).

Nearly identical terminology is used in both Phil 1:5 and 4:15-16 as was used in 1 Cor 9:23, yet this isn't mentioned by Caneday.

Thus that might suggest (or *does* suggest) that what Paul has in mind in 1 Cor 9:23 is figuratively presenting the gospel as though it were a person and is saying that Paul hopes to share with it in terms of anticipated eternal reward. That vv 24-27 immediately follow v 23 certainly supports that conclusion.

The word *misthos*, reward, is used twice by Paul earlier (in 1 Cor 9:17-18), a point also not mentioned by the author. I would see those as ironic uses, implying that Paul willingly gave up his right for wages from his gospel ministry in Corinth, but he knew there was indeed a future reward he would receive from it.

Here is a semi-exegetical comment I found from Caneday: "Within the ancient athletic arena, a runner was judged *disqualified* (*adokimos*) for breaking the rules of the games, including rules of training (cf. 2 Tim 2:5)." The only exegesis here is putting 2 Tim 2:5 in parenthesis.

But is 2 Tim 2:5 really informing our understanding of 1 Cor 9:24-27? There Paul says, "If anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules." The crowning is certainly a link, though Caneday does not point this out. But in what sense is Paul talking about "compet[ing] according to the rules" in 1 Cor 9:24-27? Does Paul mention any rules there? If so, Caneday should explain what the rules are which are found in 1 Cor 9:24-27. Or if no rules are stated, then how does 2 Tim 2:5 prove his point?

Indeed, is not 2 Tim 2:5 part of a discussion about the fact that one who works is worthy of his pay? The very next verse says, "The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops." Do people get into the Kingdom because they work hard until the end of their lives? That would seem to be Caneday's point, especially if 2 Tim 2:5-6 illustrates what he is talking about.

More importantly, why doesn't Caneday discuss the other seven uses of *adokimos* in the NT? Why no discussion of the seven uses of *dokimos*, the antonym of *adokimos*, in the NT? It would seem that 2 Tim 2:15 is very germane to the exegesis of 1 Cor 9:24-27. There Paul calls upon Timothy to be diligent that he might be an *approved* (*dokimos*) worker for Christ. That sure seems closely related to what Paul wrote in 1 Cor 9:27. But Caneday doesn't mention or discuss 2 Tim 2:15.

A bit later Caneday attempts to prove that salvation is both already and not-yet. To do so he cites three texts in English, Rom 13:11 ("For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed"), Phil 2:12-13 ("Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling..."), and 1 Cor 1:8-9 ("[God] will sustain you to the end, to be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, through whom you were called into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, is faithful"). That is proof-texting and only qualifies as exegesis if the passages transparently prove what he is saying. But they do not.

The first of those texts concerns the Rapture. The readers knew their deliverance from this evil age was near since Jesus could return at any moment (Rom 13:11; cf. 1 Thess 5:9-10) The second of those texts concerns successfully handling persecution and trials so as to be rewarded in the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 2:12-13; cf. Phil 1:6, 10). Caneday fails to mention that Paul had earlier said that

the prayers of the Philippians would work out for *his salvation* (Phil 1:19), that is, his successful handling of the persecution he was undergoing while in prison in Rome. The third passage refers to the *Bēma*, the Judgment Seat of Christ, when believers will be rewarded for work done (1 Cor 1:8-9; cf. 2 Cor 5:9-10).

Maybe I missed them, but I found no word studies in this paper. I found no comparison with other texts in which Paul speaks of approval or disapproval.

I urge the reader to give Caneday's article a very careful reading. Look for observations from the text of 1 Cor 9:23-27. I believe you will find very few. Look for comparison with other texts using the same words and phrases, both in Paul and elsewhere in the NT. I believe you will find very few.

Compare just about anything written by Zane Hodges, whom he lists as one who makes *ipso facto* claims with no exegetical proof, with this article by Caneday. I am biased. But I find much more in the way of word studies, textual studies, grammatical studies, reference to immediate and greater context, and the like in Hodges than I find in this article.

Indeed, I would not call this an exegetical article. I would call this a theological article which simply uses 1 Cor 9:24-27 as a scaffolding on which Caneday can present his view of perseverance as a condition of everlasting life.

Caneday's Rejection of Merit Theology for Rewards Doesn't Explain Away Merit Theology for Everlasting Life

I found it ironic that Caneday criticizes the loss of eternal rewards view for having a doctrine of merit. Commenting on a note in *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, Caneday writes,

The note conveys an ostensible tone of authority and finality without any tinge of awareness concerning the egregious doctrinal miscarriage it propounds: a Protestant doctrine of merit with an implied Protestant doctrine of purgatory (p. 7).

Leaving aside the ridiculous comparison of the loss of eternal rewards view with the Catholic view of purgatory, I was struck by his expression "*a Protestant doctrine of merit*." The thought in my mind was, "So your view solves the problem of merit for eternal rewards by posing instead merit for everlasting life and participation in Jesus' Kingdom? How does that help? In fact, isn't that a direct contradiction of Rom 4:4-5 and Eph 2:8-9?"

I don't see how Caneday can get away from the idea that a prize (*brabeion*) is pay for work done. He gave no study of the word in the NT. I don't see how he can get away from the idea that the related word *misthos* (1 Cor 3:8, 14; 9:17-18; see also Rom 4:4; 1 Tim 5:18) refers to wages or pay for work done. He gave no study of *misthos* in the NT either.

Why is his view not guilty of contradicting Rom 4:4-5; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; and a host of other texts in Paul? I don't know, because he doesn't discuss those

other texts. He states his view and does not deal with potential objections to his view. I was taught that part of exegesis is considering possible objections to your own view. That he does not do that is surprising.

Possibly he has answers, though I could not find any in this article, nor did I find them in his 2001 book *The Race Set Before Us*.

Why No Comparison with Other Texts in Paul Like Ephesians 2:8-9?

He wrote, "The gospel requires faithful endurance from us in order that we might lay hold of salvation in the age to come" (p. 3). How does that harmonize that our salvation is "not as a result of works, lest anyone should boast" Review of "Grace and Warning in Paul's Gospel" 13 (Eph 2:9)? Or how does that not contradict the Lord's statement, "He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35)?

Caneday also made this remarkable statement:

What Paul says is urgent not only for him but for all who would have a share in God's saving power. Lest we assume that salvation is ours regardless of how we behave, the apostle appeals to us with his extended analogy, the athletic imagery of [1 Cor] 9:24-27 (p. 23).

If our salvation (i.e., entrance into the Kingdom) depends on how we behave, then doesn't that contradict Eph 2:9 and Rom 4:4-5 and Titus 3:5? And doesn't that contradict what the Lord Jesus taught as recorded in the Gospel of John? Where is *behavior* in John 3:16? Is not everlasting life for *whoever believes in Him*, not *whoever behaves in Him*?

Caneday Rejects Eternal Security Apart from Perseverance

Caneday criticizes me for my suggestion that one who believes in Jesus is eternally secure regardless of whether he perseveres or not. He writes, "Wilkin embraces a radicalized version of *eternal security* that is void of and disconnected from perseverance in the faith" (p. 11, italics his).

When I was in seminary I was taught that all true believers would persevere in faith and good works till death or the Rapture. However, I was never told that eternal security was contingent upon that perseverance. Rather, I was taught that the perseverance was guaranteed by God and was something the believer would do whether he wanted to or not. The believer could not ultimately thwart the work of God in his life. The believer might fall for a time. But he would come back from the far country because God would cause him to do so.

I never heard Caneday's version of Calvinism, where perseverance is a condition of eternal security and not a result of it.³ In light of the instruction I received at Dallas Theological Seminary, I'd say that Caneday has a "radicalized view of eternal security." But like Dispensationalism (witness Progressive Dispensationalism), Calvinism is changing.

Calvinism has been changing in academic circles. Now many Calvinists speak freely of perseverance in good works as a condition of escaping eternal condemnation, of final justification by works before God on the Last Day, and of final salvation as a prize won by the believers who are faithful. Anyone not blinded by modern scholarship would call such statements examples of works salvation. No matter how much Caneday says he doesn't believe in works salvation, his protestations are transparently false.

Contradictory Statements Exist in This Paper

Normally scholars are careful not to contradict themselves within a paper. To do so casts doubts on the validity of their paper.

This paper has at least one outright contradiction, as well as at least one statement which gives strong indication of being contradictory.

The first example concerns a blatant contradiction. Caneday contradicts himself as to whether Paul was or was not expressing concern in 1 Cor 9:23-27 that he might be eternally condemned. In a number of places Caneday says he was concerned. For example, "Paul poses the possibility of his own failure to pass the test in the Day of Judgment and the possibility of his being cast into perdition [i.e., the lake of fire]"⁴ (p. 6; see also pp. 25-26). However, using almost identical language, Caneday also says that Paul was not concerned about his eternal destiny. When discussing whether Paul feared "that he might lose the race in which salvation is the imperishable wreath," Caneday writes:

Such a view [that Paul doubted that God would be faithful "to preserve his people unto final salvation"] of how promise and warning correlate does not allow one simultaneously to believe the warning, that perseverance is essential for attaining final salvation, and to believe the promise, that God preserves everyone [sic] of his children unto final salvation. Of course, oscillating between such believing and doubting is silly and has no biblical warrant. Nevertheless, such oscillation is precisely what we must affirm, *if we hold that Paul fears that God might reject him as a reprobate in the Day of Judgment* (pp. 28-29, emphasis added).

Note that earlier Caneday says that Paul poses the possibility of his own failure to pass the test on the Day of Judgment and to be cast into perdition.⁵ Then here he reverses course and said that it "is silly has no biblical warrant" to "hold that Paul fears that God might reject him as a reprobate in the Day of Judgment."

A second example concerns what appears to be a contradiction, but which Caneday attempts to explain as a non-contradiction. This example grows directly out of the first. Here Caneday tries to explain how Paul can be afraid to go to hell but not be afraid that he might go to hell. Here is what Caneday writes,

Paul never implies personal *fear that he might perish* but he does imply that he *fears to perish* or that he *fears lest he perish* (p. 28, italics his).

Now in English, there is no discernible difference in meaning between those three statements. Caneday goes on to explain what he means:

There is a vast difference between *fearing to perish* and *fearing that I might perish*, whether in rock climbing or in living the Christian life. *Fearing that I might perish*, in both situations, entails *fright* that destroys and expels confidence and assurance. *Fearing to perish*, when rock climbing or running to obtain final salvation, is the proper kind of fear that cultivates caution and is wholly compatible with confidence and assurance of achieving the goal. *Fear to perish* is the godly response in Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 9:23-27; *fear to perish* is integral to attaining and obtaining the imperishable wreath of salvation (p. 28, italics his).

It is hard for me to discern precisely what Caneday means there. It sounds like theological doublespeak. But at least his illustration concerning the rock climbing gives a hint of what he means, even if I can't see the difference between the three English expressions about fear of perishing. He seems to be saying that a little fear of falling and going to hell is a good thing but that a lot of fear of falling and going to hell is a bad thing. But is there any indication in 1 Cor 9:24-27 that Paul is talking about degrees of fear of hell, or even that he is talking about hell at all? No.

Whether a rock climber has a little or a lot of fear, all rock climbers have a fear of falling. There is no such thing as a rock climber who is certain that he will never fall. (Indeed, I doubt there has ever been a seasoned rock climber who has not fallen many times.)

If rock climbing illustrates Caneday's view, then there is no such thing as a believer in Jesus Christ who is certain that he will never fall. Evidently Caneday himself has a lot of confidence in his own steadfastness and thinks it isn't very likely he will fall. But if he is like the rock climber in his own illustration, then he realizes he might fall and he might perish. No matter how confident he is, he is not certain. After all, if the Apostle Paul was not certain he would persevere, then how can any believer be sure he will persevere?

Already, but Not Yet, Is Quite Confusing in This Article

As with the book he co-authored, Caneday promotes salvation as something the believer already has and also as something the believer does not yet have.

Now *JOTGES* readers would agree that there are things which the regenerate person does not yet possess, but which all born-again people will one day possess (e.g., glorified bodies, experiential perfection, being in the presence of the Lord Jesus, being in the Kingdom, etc.). However, we do not say, as Caneday does, that we both have everlasting life now and that all believers will win everlasting life on the Last Day if we endure to the end of our lives. While we believe that there is a fullness of eternal life that will only be given to the overcoming believer (e.g., Gal 6:7-9), we do not believe that all believers will receive that fullness. Caneday is not speaking of a fullness of everlasting life that only some believers will have. In fact, he is not even clear what this future everlasting life is. He never speaks of abundant life or of everlasting life experienced more fully.

Here is what he seems to be saying: the true believer already has everlasting life as a gift now and he will later win everlasting life as a prize for working for Christ until the end. The professing believer, on the other hand, doesn't really have everlasting life as a free gift now, nor will he win it as a prize for perseverance works later. I indicate that he *seems to be saying this*, for Caneday is not clear. He never speaks of professing believers or of true believers. Only once in the article does he say that anyone who has eternal life now will assuredly win it on the last day. Aside from that one reference, one would think he was saying that the present experience of eternal life does not guarantee winning the prize in the future.

Since Caneday says that Paul was afraid to be eternally condemned, and since he says that he wrote 1 Cor 9:24-27 "lest we assume that salvation is ours regardless of how we behave" (p. 23), he clearly believes that Paul was not sure of his eternal destiny when he wrote 1 Cor 9:24-27. That would mean that the Apostle Paul was unsure that he had everlasting life at that time. Does that make any sense? Are we to believe that he wrote thirteen NT epistles and yet did not know he was born again? It is hard to believe that the man who came to faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus did not know whether he was truly regenerate. When he was healing the sick and raising the dead was he unsure he would get into the Kingdom?

This view seems like another way to be able to preach justification by faith alone, apart from works, and yet at the same time deny justification by faith alone, apart from works. It seems that pastors and theologians will go to great lengths today to come up with a way of getting perseverance in good works into the equation of justification by faith alone, apart from works.

Conclusion

In Caneday's view the Apostle Paul believed that salvation from hell is a prize to be won. The way in which one obtains this prize is by persevering in faith and good works to the end of one's Christian life.

Caneday views the Christian life as the race of our eternal lives. Eternal life and eternal death are at stake. So run with endurance the race that is set before you so that you might win the prize of eternal salvation from hell.

But what does this mean, practically speaking?

First, no one can be sure he has everlasting life prior to death.

Second, fear of hell should be a regular part of every Christian's daily experience.

Third, while *already salvation* is by faith alone, *not yet salvation* will be by perseverance in good works done for Christ.

Fourth, when we evangelize people, we are evangelizing ourselves (since we need to be reminded that perseverance is the condition for winning final salvation on the Last Day).

Fifth, it is a major error to tell people that all who simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have everlasting life that can never be lost. That is a radical version of eternal security that may actually lead people to hell, since they will not be taught the necessity of perseverance in good works to gain *final salvation*.

Sixth, we must realize that we are not sure of the eternal destiny of anyone, including our spouse, children, parents, coworkers, fellow church members, pastor, elders, deacons, and missionaries.

Seventh, this makes it hard to decide who to marry, for believers are only to marry other believers. Being unable to know who is born again makes it essentially impossible to marry and at the same time obey Scripture.

I believe that Caneday has good intentions. However, if he has departed from the Word of God on the condition of everlasting life, then he is leading many people astray on the single most important issue in Scripture. Caneday invites readers to correct him when he writes in the conclusion: "We need to be willing to identify kindly others' blind spots *and be prepared for correction ourselves*, for the work of exegesis and theology is a collaborative endeavor that entails correctives" (p. 30, italics added). I have tried to "identify kindly [Caneday's] blind spots." Through the start of my senior year in college I essentially held his view (mine was simply more strident, since I believed perseverance in sinless perfection was needed to get salvation on the last day). When I was delivered from that view, I experienced a profound sense of gratitude and love toward my Lord and Savior that I haven't gotten over yet. I wish that joy for Caneday as well.

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1A. B. Caneday, "'Lest after preaching to others I become disqualified': Grace and Warning in Paul's Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:23-27)," *Testamentum Imperium, An International Theological Journal*, Vol 1: 2005-2007: 1-32. [Available online here](#). Accessed January 25, 2011.

2This is redundant since laconic is a synonym for brief.

3I wrote my master's thesis at DTS on an exegetical evaluation of the Reformed doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. In it I argued that eternal

security (half of Calvinism's fifth point) is guaranteed, but perseverance, while commanded, is not guaranteed.

⁴Editor's note: This is not Caneday's view. Actually, he was here restating the Arminian view. Please see [the appendix](#) at the end of the article for a revised form of this section. Please also see the Autumn 2011 *JOTGES* for a detailed correction explaining the error.

⁵This statement is not accurate since, as noted in the preceding footnote, the citation I gave was not Caneday's statement of his own position, but of that of Arminians. See [the appendix](#) for a revision that eliminates the error.

APPENDIX

A Revised Version of the Sixth Section of the Body of This Review Concerning Seemingly Contradictory Statements

Author's note: As noted above in a footnote, I somehow ended up misquoting Caneday in this section. What follows is a revised form of that section. In the revision I replace the misquote with a correct quote. The new material is in blue to make it easy to see what is new.

Normally scholars are carefully not to contradict themselves within a scholarly paper. To do so casts doubts about the validity of their paper.

This paper has at least one outright contradiction, as well as at least one statement which gives strong indication of being contradictory.

The first example concerns an outright contradiction. Caneday contradicts himself as to whether Paul was or was not expressing concern in 1 Cor 9:23-27 that he might be eternally condemned. In one instance Caneday says that Paul was concerned. He writes:

Both (1 Cor) 9:23 and 9:27 express *Paul's singular concern to benefit from the gospel he proclaims to others* [italics added]. Observe the two verses in parallel.

And I do all things on account of the gospel, in order *that I might be a fellow partaker of it* (9:23 [italics his]).

But I punish my body and enslave it, lest after I have preached to others, *I myself should become disqualified* (9:27, [italics his]).

The whole context makes it clear that to become *disqualified* [italics his] (*adokimos*) is opposite becoming a *fellow partaker of the gospel* [italics his] (*sunkoinonos autou*; 9:23) of the gospel.

For the apostle, then, *adokimos* metaphorically represents reprobation, banishment from eternal salvation at the close of the race that takes place in the arena of life in the present age. Paul's athletic imagery, therefore, makes clear to

the Corinthians that they are not above him, the apostle who proclaims the good news of God's saving power to them. *If, in the Day of Judgment he will be reprobated before God apart from perseverance in the way of the gospel (cf. 1 Tim. 4:16), there will also be no salvation for them either, if they fail to follow his pattern of running the race to win* [italics added]. Leaving the starting blocks does not win the wreath of victory apart from going the distance and crossing the finish line. We will obtain the imperishable wreath of salvation only by running with diligence and deliberate perseverance in the arena of faith.⁶

However, using similar language, Caneday also says that Paul not concerned about his eternal destiny. When discussing whether Paul feared "that he might lose the race in which salvation is the imperishable wreath," Caneday writes:

Such a view [that Paul doubted that God would be faithful "to preserve his people unto final salvation"] of how promise and warning correlate does not allow one simultaneously to believe the warning, that perseverance is essential for attaining final salvation, and to believe the promise, that God preserves everyone [sic] of his children unto final salvation. Of course, oscillating between such believing and doubting is silly and has no biblical warrant. Nevertheless, such oscillation is precisely what we must affirm, *if we hold that Paul fears that God might reject him as a reprobate in the Day of Judgment*" (pp. 28-29, italics added).

Note that earlier Caneday said (as cited above) that Paul's "singular concern [was] to benefit from the gospel he proclaims to others" and that "If, in the Day of Judgment he will be reprobated before God apart from perseverance in the way of the gospel (cf. 1 Tim. 4:16), there will also be no salvation for them either, if they fail to follow his pattern of running the race to win." Then here he reverses course and says that it "is silly has no biblical warrant" to "hold that Paul fears that God might reject him as a reprobate in the Day of Judgment."

A second example concerns what appears to be a contradiction, but which Caneday attempts to explain as a non-contradiction. This example grows directly out of first. Here Caneday tries to explain how Paul can be afraid to go to hell and afraid lest he go to hell, but not be afraid that he might go to hell. I'm not making this up. Here is what Caneday writes,

"Paul never implies personal *fear that he might perish* but he does imply that he *fears to perish* or that he *fears lest he perish*" (p. 28, italics his).

Now in English, there is no discernable difference in meaning between those three statements. Of course, Caneday is a Greek scholar so maybe he has some underlying Greek phrases in mind that would clear this up. No, he doesn't. He goes on to explain what he means:

"There is a vast difference between *fearing to perish* and *fearing that I might perish*, whether in rock climbing or in living the Christian life. *Fearing that I might perish*, in both situations, entails *fright* that destroys and expels confidence and assurance. *Fearing to perish*, when rock climbing or running to obtain final salvation, is the proper kind of fear that cultivates caution and is wholly compatible with confidence and assurance of achieving the goal. *Fear to perish* is the godly

response in Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 9:23-27; *fear to perish* is integral to attaining and obtaining the imperishable wreath of salvation" (p. 28, italics his).

It is hard for me to discern precisely what Caneday means there. It sounds like theological doublespeak. But at least his illustration concerning the rock climbing gives a hint of what he means, even if I can't see the difference between the three English expressions about fear of perishing. He seems to be saying that a little fear of falling and going to hell is a good thing but that a lot of fear of falling and going to hell is a bad thing. But is there any indication in 1 Cor 9:24-27 that Paul is talking about degree of fear of hell, or even that he is talking about hell at all? No.

Whether a rock climber has a little or a lot of fear of falling, all rock climbers have a fear of falling. There is no such thing as a rock climber who is certain that he will never fall. (Indeed, I doubt there has ever been a seasoned rock climber who has not fallen many times.)

If rock climbing illustrates Caneday's view, then there is no such thing as a believer in Jesus Christ who is certain that he will never fall. Evidently Caneday himself has a lot of confidence in his own steadfastness and thinks it isn't very likely he will fall. But if he is like the rock climber in his own illustration, then he realizes he might fall and he might perish. No matter how confident he is, he is not certain. After all, if the Apostle Paul was not certain he would persevere, then how can any believer be sure he will persevere?

⁶Caneday, "1 Corinthians 9:23-27," 25-26. Editor's note: in the version of this article printed in the Journal, a different quote was wrongly used. Please see the Autumn 2011 issue for a correction. That quote has been left in the online version of the article (see above) at the request of Caneday and replaced with this longer, and accurate, citation in this appendix.
