

Reward According to Works. By Robert Govett. Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1989. Paper, \$8.95.

The overarching thrust of this book is one man's attempt to answer a very complex and controversial question: what is the degree and duration of regret and remorse at the judgment seat of Christ. This book fulfills its purpose, even if one does not agree with the final conclusions.

The chief difficulty with this book is its lack of cohesion. The book is a fourth edition reprint from a series of lengthy tracts that were first published in 1870-95. The six chapters are all treated as individual works and are numbered as such. The result is that any reference made to a page number is a bit confusing. The language is also quite archaic and can be difficult to read.

Despite these challenges, *Reward According to Works* is worthy of a careful read. Chapters 1 and 4-6 are tracts from Govett. Chapters 2-3 consist of letters with two colleagues Govett debated with. Since this book can be fairly technical and repetitive, it seems best to concisely lay out a handful of Govett's convictions in summary form.

First, the NT books were written only to believers (1:7-10). Therefore, the warning passages apply to believers, not false professors. Second, "*Eternal life* is ours as soon as we believe, but to enter the *millennial kingdom* is a matter of reward" (1:19, author's italics). Govett enlists seven "entering the kingdom" passages spoken to disciples (Matt 5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23-24; Luke 18:17; John 3:5; 1 Cor 6:9-10, see 1:24-36) to argue that not all Christians will enter millennium. For example, a Christian who has not been baptized will not enter the millennial kingdom (1:52-64). Govett writes, "In regard of Christ's entrance-rite Scriptures teach, that the absence of baptism will exclude from the kingdom of God" (3:11). Third, only faithful and obedient believers will "inherit the kingdom" (e.g., 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5). Some will not even see the kingdom, some will enter, and some will inherit! Fourth, the Bible is full of conditional promises that have nothing to do with salvation (Govett has counted 83 "if" statements, see 1:46). As recipients of God's unconditional promises, believers must exercise obedience to experience His promises in time and in eternity. Fifth, the "kingdom of God" and

“kingdom of heaven” refer to the millennial kingdom (2:11; 2:67-68). Therefore, the parables that use these two phrases have relevance to the millennial kingdom.

Finally, the book concludes with a brief pastoral letter entitled “Seek the Sabbath Rest to Come!” In this motivational conclusion, Govett looks back on the failure of Israel and urges us to “labour to enter into the rest that is to come.”

Govett’s work *must* be reckoned with. His grasp of the totality of Scripture is astounding! His arguments are also rather persuasive. Whether or not, he is correct on the issue of millennial disinheritance (and what disqualifies a person), however, is debatable. This writer believes that this subject needs to be explored further (although *The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph Dillow was a magnificent work). Nonetheless, this book is must reading for Bible students who are interested in a thorough treatment of the eternal consequences that accompany a Christian life characterized by carnality. May the reader beware: You have been warned of what may occur if your life is marked by unfaithfulness!