

Martin, R. A. *An Introduction to New Testament Greek*. Dillsboro, N.C.: Western North Carolina Press, 1978. vi + 205 pp. Paperback, \$6.95.

There are many Greek grammars already on the market, but new ones keep coming out. One reason for this is the dissatisfaction on the part of some concerning available grammars for one reason or another and the feeling that one can improve upon them. This grammar of R. A. Martin is, I believe, a definite improvement. Of course, one cannot really get a total feel of a grammar until one uses it; but as I examine this grammar I am impressed with its clarity and the obvious care with which it has been put together. It is evident that the author has a knack for teaching, and that he has the student in mind rather than his colleagues who may think that many of his explanations are not necessary.

Some helpful features are the treatment of syllabification, short lessons with good exercises, explanations of grammatical terms (even simple ones), Greek readings, ample illustrations of points made, listing of principal parts of commonly used verbs, good explanation of participles and their uses, exercises especially with the *mi* verbs to establish confidence in recognition of these forms, and an English-Greek Vocabulary in addition to the Greek-English Vocabulary. Many other helpful features enhance the book.

To further improve the volume, more readings could be added, infrequent forms could be eliminated (even though they may appear necessary to complete the conjugation), and the sequence of lessons could be improved (the contract verbs appear in Lesson 4).

As a whole this grammar is excellent. Students especially, but teachers also, will appreciate it.

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Oliver, W. H. *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 1978. 269 pp. \$15.00.

Primarily a social historian who has been diverted into the study of millennialism through his research into the life and teachings of Robert Owen, Oliver became increasingly aware of, and puzzled by, Owen's frequent use of millennial terminology. This prompted him to undertake a study of millennialism in England during the early nineteenth century in an attempt to discern exactly what Owen intended by his use of the vocabulary and symbolism of millennialism. The result is a well-researched monograph which helps clarify both the nature and the extent of millennial speculation in England during the half century following the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Oliver's thesis is that in these decades "the habit of looking at the world in a manner shaped by biblical prophecy was a normal and widespread activity" (p. 239). Consequently, he argues, the vocabulary, the imagery, and the symbolism of prophecy were employed not only in millennial speculation, but on behalf of a wide variety of political and social causes. This assertion is supported by an analysis of the millennial view of the wide spectrum of biblical expositors and social prophets. They range from John Henry Newman to Joanna Southcott and include such figures as George Stanley Faber, Edward Irving, Henry Drummond, William Cunningham, Edward Bickersteth, John Ward, James Smith, and Robert Owen. Through this analysis Oliver is able to delineate clearly the widespread interest in prophetic and millennial speculation in England at the time.

However, Oliver's real interest remains social reform rather than scriptural exegesis; hence his sympathies lie with the social aspirations of the millennialists rather than with their spiritual anticipations. This leads him to portray Robert Owen, the agnostic social reformer, as being in the tradition of millennialist exposition. Certainly Owen's vocabulary and imagery reflect the millennial milieu in which he lived, although the goals in which he believed and for which he struggled clearly differentiate him from traditional millennialists.

Unfortunately, Oliver has written for the specialist rather than for the general reader. Both individuals and events are mentioned without any clarification or detail provided; and when detail is provided, it is often much later in the text. E.g., the Albury group is mentioned seven times before an explanation of the membership and ideology of the group appears on p. 107. While this will not trouble those familiar with English history during this period, it may frustrate those who are interested in the development of millennial ideas and know little of English history. Furthermore, Oliver's analysis of millennial preaching is sometimes complicated and difficult to follow — though that is possibly the fault of the preachers themselves rather than of the analyst. Oliver's frustration with their methods of expression is occasionally apparent as when he points out, after one complicated analysis, "It is a little hard to say what all this is about" (pp. 122-123).

Nevertheless, Oliver has provided a succinct account of the significant individuals and the main ideas of English millennialism during the first half of the nineteenth century. In so doing he has increased our understanding of the religious currents which influenced those decades.

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Peters, Ted. *Futures—Human and Divine*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1978. 192 pp. \$10.95.

This volume is a somewhat unusual work in that it endeavors to grapple very seriously with human future both in the light of the biblical message and in the context of meaningful dialogue with the scientific, sociological, ecological, and other basically or, at least, ostensibly secular concerns of today. Peters points out that just as there was a ferment near the year A.D. 1000 for a sort of "millennialism," so in our own day "the secular and scientific communities are just as concerned about the year 2000" (p. 9). He speaks of "a new academic profession" — "futurology," which "is the science that seeks to understand the future and to provide the tools whereby humans can obtain greater control over their own destiny" (*ibid.*). The author further proposes that future consciousness "is religious," by which he means two things: "First, in some cases it is explicitly religious because overtly religious groups from time to time express distinctive concern for the future. . . . Second, there are implicit religious dimensions to much of even avowedly secular futuristic thinking" (p. 14). The second dimension requires, says Peters, a "principle of interpretation," and the "method I intend to use for studying this dimension is a *hermeneutic of culture*" (*ibid.*).

It is difficult in a short review to give the reader an adequate concept of what this volume is all about, and my normal reviewing practice of including an indication of main chapter titles does not in the case of this book seem particularly useful. Rather, I would simply summarize by indicating that Peters discusses both biblical concepts (such as apocalypticism) and the scientific and humanistic assessments and proposals for solving critical ecological, population-growth, etc., problems which face the world of the late twentieth century. Among concepts noted are those of Charles Reich in *The Greening of America*, Robert Heilbroner's treatment of our current