



The structure of a prepositional phrase, the expansion of case functions, and why meanings of each preposition should be associated with an appropriate case are clarified. Why a range of meanings for each preposition is dependent upon contextual discernment is explained. Vance's cogent introduction stimulated me to reread J. H. Moulton's short chapter on prepositions in his *An Introduction to New Testament Greek* (London: Epworth, 1930), 181–84. Many introductory grammars may be perceived as building on Moulton here. It seems fair to note that Vance has excelled in expounding upon the necessary main points that students often find troublesome.

The next section treats proper prepositions (7–19). Following a concise definition of these words as being compounded with verbs and standing as part of a prepositional phrase, Vance provides a selective list of prepositions that illustrate how meaning depends on the dative, genitive, and accusative cases when prepositions are used with only one case, with two cases, and with three cases. The contextual usage of sixteen proper prepositions (ἀνά, ἀπό, διά, εἰς, ἐκ, ἐν, ἐπί, κατά, μετά, παρά, περί, πρό, πρόσ, σύν, ὑπέρ, and ὑπό) is then demonstrated by examples from the New Testament. Each preposition's function and significance in a typical sentence is identified. Attention is drawn to its contextual meaning relative to case. For example, the word ὑπέρ in the genitive usually signifies benefaction (Rom 8:31), while other meanings include the ideas of substitution and reference (John 11:50; 2 Cor 7:14). With the accusative, ὑπέρ usually signifies rank (Acts 26:13). The Greek text involving ὑπέρ is set out in each instance with pertinent comments along with a matching translation from the KJV.

Vance employs the KJV because it is familiar, and this is surely a reasonable tactic. However, since so many students today are using the NIV, NRSV, NJB, and NASB, perhaps it might be appealing in a second edition to include some of the work of these modern translation committees as well, alongside the KJV. Also, perhaps alternative renderings might be mentioned, as with ὑπέρ at John 11:50 (ἵνα εἷς ἄνθρωπος ἀποθάνῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ), where M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 1:322, offer “ὑπέρ for = ἀντί instead of.” Given the wide usage among students of Zerwick and Grosvenor and of several modern translations in English-speaking lands, I trust that it will not at all be taken as a negative criticism of Vance's *Guide* to suggest that incorporation of these possible emendations might engender broader appeal of an already fine presentation.

The section on improper or adverbial prepositions (19–31) defines them as differing from proper prepositions in two respects, namely, not being compounded with verbs and being able to function as an adverb, a substantive, a conjunction, and an adjective, as well as a preposition. These words exhibit syntactical independence, not being part of a prepositional phrase, and generally have only one meaning when used as a preposition.

This is an area that can use some clarity, and Vance does an admirable job in that regard. He provides a comprehensive list of forty improper prepositions in the Greek New Testament and then sets out instructive examples of how twenty-five of them actually function. Twenty-two of these also function as other than prepositions. Given that students will recognize many of these immediately from introductory grammars, such as ἅμα, ἄχρι, ἐγγύς, ἐπάνω, ἕως, κύκλω, μεταξύ, ὀπισθεν, πλησίον, χάριν, and χωρίς, the further exploration offered here with attention to detail is surely appropriate.

In each of the twenty-five instances Vance provides several texts with insightful explanatory comments. His entry for ἐγγύς reads as follows: “The word ἐγγύς is used as both a preposition and an adverb. It is the only improper preposition that is used with both the genitive and dative cases. As a preposition it means ‘near’” (22). He references John 11:54 and Matt 24:32 for its prepositional and adverbial uses, respectively. A dative case is not mentioned, as at Acts 9:38. Throughout all of these entries, Vance displays skill as an experienced teacher. His presentation is straightforward and convincing.

Vance concludes with a short helpful section (31) on the adjectival use of prepositional phrases. Here he shows by way of four examples (Mark 13:25; Col 3:22; 1 John 2:13, 15) how these phrases preceded by an article are used attributively and substantively.

Vance’s *Guide* is to be welcomed as a beneficial supplement to all introductory grammars, including his own *Greek Verbs in the New Testament and Their Principal Parts* (2006). In its topical sphere, Vance’s little *Guide* is also good background to Zerwick and Grosvenor’s *Grammatical Analysis*. Vance shines light on the common prepositions of the Greek New Testament and contributes to a precise acquaintance of them.