This study ... has produced an awareness of the remarkable depth of theological meaning involved in the use of the present tense. The great divine happening, when expressed in the present tense, becomes contemporaneous and parallel to the historical situation of the reader or of the liturgical community which comes into contact with the biblical text. This contemporaneous quality of the texts which have been studied can perhaps be illustrated in an example, paraphrasing one of the best known johannine texts: instead of thinking in terms of “the Word of God was made man and dwelt amongst us”, the meaning is best conveyed in terms of “the Word of God becomes man and dwells among us”.

Readers who find this sort of language and argument compelling will no doubt appreciate the book. Those who are primarily interested in tightly reasoned use of evidence will come across many frustrating passages. Nevertheless, one must acknowledge that there is probably a measure of truth in the author’s thesis, and that some of his exegetical discussions are provocative and deserve attention.

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Readers of Novum Testamentum will not be unaware of the philosophical problems involved in deciding whether a work is, or is not, a “unity”. Any literary work employs sources, whether the author is aware of the derivativeness of his ideas or not. To that extent, there is always a diversity in the material or in the ideas that undergird a work. So when we talk of “unity”, are we referring to the next step up, namely unity of authorship of the text as written? This, of course, can be decided on internal criteria alone—literary criticism properly so-called: the vocabulary and syntactic and stylistic tricks which distinguish one writer from another. Or when we talk of “unity”, are we meaning yet another level, namely the transmission of a work as a unity—a manuscript unity (like, inter alia, II Corinthians) rather than a unity of conception?

Henne is one in a long line of scholars who have addressed the question of whether or not the Shepherd of Hermas is a “unity”. Thielsch a century and a half ago was the first to postulate a diversity of origin for the Vision on the one hand and the rest on the other. Hilgenfeld towards the end of the century proposed a triple origin: Visions I to IV; Vision V to Similitude VII; and Similitudes VIII to X. Link and Baumgärtner independently defended a unity of authorship against Hilgenfeld (although Hilgenfeld’s basic scheme surfaced again in the work of Giet in the 1960s). The nature of the question was refined at the turn of the century by Spitta and Van Bakel, who both postulated stages in the growth of the collection. This culminated in Coleborne’s recent theory of no fewer than six independent authors for Visions I to Similitude IX.

Henne stands in the tradition of Link and Baumgärtner in maintaining the “unity” of the Shepherd, although he does not define what he means by that term. He sets about his task of defending this “unity” in two ways:—

a) by dealing with external criteria such as citations and references in the Fathers, and divisions and numeration-differences in the manuscripts and versions (which occupies one-third of the book under review); and

b) by discussing certain words (ἀφεσις, ἀρετή, θλῦσις, σὺν τῷ θεῷ) and themes (penitence, eschatology, pneumatology and christology) which he regards as
significant in different sections of the *Shepherd*. The section on penitence predominates here, occupying a further one-third of the book.

The weakness of this work is that Henne is mesmerised by the question of whether *Visions* I to IV belong with the rest of the work, or no. He deals with a question that is a century and a half old, and that has been rendered obsolete by other, more refined, questions. The manuscript tradition, the translation-history of the versions and the pattern of citations in the fathers all indicate that the question should be whether at least four sections (*Visions* I to IV; *Mandates* I to XIIa; *Similitudes* II to VII or VIII; and *Similitude* IX) have a common origin, since the intervening *Vision* V, *Mandate* XIIb-*Similitude* I and *Similitude* X are patently secondary.

Praiseworthy is Henne’s putting external criteria first—what the manuscripts tell us about the various forms in which the *Shepherd* circulated in the early church is a neglected area of research. But this fact displays a degree of methodological confusion—all that the manuscript tradition can do is to indicate whether or not different components have been transmitted together, not show whether or not they have a common origin.

Henne shows that the stichometry of the Codex Claromontanus (which gives 4000 stichoi for the *Shepherd*—double the number for the Fourth Gospel) presupposes the entire work as known to us from the printed editions. He postulates that Clement of Alexandria also knew the entire work (although that father never cites the earlier *Similitudes*).

The testimony of Athanasius that the *Shepherd* began with the first *Mandate* is well known, and Bonner’s reconstruction of P. Mich. 129—fallacious in this reviewer’s opinion—purports to confirm the absence of the *Visions* from one form of the *Shepherd*. Henne adds to this evidence the alleged lack of any citations from the *Visions* in the earliest Western fathers (thereby ignoring the evidence that they were known to Tertullian and the author of the *Vision* of Saturus). Henne explains away Athanasius’s remark, and reaches the conclusion that ‘‘la tradition manuscrite plaide donc en faveur d’un seul Pasteur rédigé par un unique Hermas’’ (p. 164). Quite how the manuscript tradition can point to this conclusion this reviewer fails completely to understand.

Henne is on firmer ground when he deals with purely internal criteria. He admits that apparent doctrinal differences between, e.g. *Vision* III and *Similitude* IX accentuate the problem of seeing them as proceeding from a single hand. However, he is justifiably sceptical about regarding the choice of different words as a necessary indication of different authors. Giet’s observation that σῶμα is used in the *Visions* and *Similitude* IX while σάρξ is used in the *Mandates* and earlier *Similitude* is attributed to different contexts rather than different authors. Differences in the use of θύσις are similarly dismissed as ‘‘deliberate stylistic technique’’, whereas Coleborne regarded them as support for his theory of multiple authorship based on stylistic criteria.

Similarly, different conceptions of Christian commitment in the *Shepherd* are ascribed to differences in audience and approach rather than differences in authorship. Henne sees the tower vision of *Vision* III as addressed to catechumens, the fourth *Mandate* to the newly baptised, the eighth *Similitude* to Christians of long standing. *Similitude* IX presents an allegory in temporal (historical) order rather than the existential (experiential) order followed in *Vision* III and *Similitude* VIII. The same difference in audience (between catechumens in *Visions* I to IV, the baptised elsewhere) is held to explain differences in the eschatology of the *Shepherd*—an imminent event in the *Visions*, an event that has lost its immediacy elsewhere.

Again, different pedagogical approaches are held to underlie the fact that τυντικόν is singular in *Similitude* V, plural in *Similitude* IX; and that the christologies of these two sections differ (Henne refers here to his published doctoral thesis).