

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

VOL. XLV.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Adelphi Terrace House, Charing Cross, W.C.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1913.

541ST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE ON MONDAY
MARCH 3RD, 1913.

DR. THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES OCCUPIED THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and signed.

The SECRETARY announced the election of Mr. J. T. Burton and Miss J. E. Williams as Associates, and the Rev. D. H. D. Wilkinson as a Missionary Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Mr. E. J. Sewell, Member of Council, to read his Paper.

POMPEII. Life in the First Century A.D. By E. J. SEWELL, Esq.

TO most travellers in Southern Italy the uncovered remains of the town of Pompeii are an object of great and striking interest. As one stands in the streets of the town, and sees the ruts worn in the stone pavement by passing vehicles, the last of which travelled there more than 1,800 years ago, or spells out the inscriptions painted on the walls, such, *e.g.*, as one calling on the citizens to vote for Herennius Celsus for ædile at the coming election (an equally long time ago), one realizes with great vividness the busy and varied life that once throbbed in these streets now empty and deserted.

And when one finds in a wine-shop a notice that goods can only be had on cash-payment, or on examining some ivory dice found in a house discovers that they are loaded so as always to throw double-sixes,* it is brought home to one that human nature, in many of its manifestations, was exactly the same in A.D. 70 as it is to-day.

It is true that none of these things are absolutely new discoveries. They might possibly, by diligent students of ancient literature, be found mentioned or be inferred with practical certainty from what we can learn from Roman authors. But Horace has told us—

* I have been unable after a good deal of search to find any clear allusion in Latin literature to loaded dice. They are clearly alluded to in Aristotle's *Problematica*, xvi, 12, and as Pompeii was, historically, so closely connected with Greek writers and Greek customs, this might have enabled us to infer with great probability that loaded dice *would* be known there. But the finding of the actual dice themselves turns this probability into certainty.

“Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus”*

and it is one of the characteristics of archaeological discovery that, even where it does not furnish us with absolutely fresh knowledge, it adds so much force and vividness to what was known before, but known only in a dry and lifeless way, as to make it almost new knowledge so far as its practical effect is concerned.

Pompeii has only been partially dug out, and Herculaneum very little, so that no one can tell what new facts they may yet yield. Dr. Deissmann has drawn attention to one which may almost rank as new, viz., the use in “graffiti” of methods of indicating names by numerals exactly like that used in the Apocalypse by St. John for indicating “the Beast.” He mentions (*Light from the Ancient East*, p. 276) some words scribbled on a wall in Greek—*φιλω ἧς ἀριθμὸς φμῆ*. “I love her whose number is 545.” In this case any lady of the writer’s acquaintance could easily discover whether her name fitted the conditions or did not, while strangers would have nothing to guide them as to the person meant. So in the case of the author of the Apocalypse, he must have known when he said (Revelation xiii, 18), “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six,” that circumstances familiar to his Christian readers would make it easy for *them* to fit the number to a name, but that without the guidance they had, strangers would not be able to do so with any certainty.

The point however is that in the Pompeian “graffiti” it is Greek letters that are used, whereas most modern “exegetists” have assumed that ‘gematria’ was a specifically Jewish form of the numerical riddle, and therefore attempts have often been made” to find the name corresponding to the number 666 (or 616 another reading) by means of the Hebrew alphabet. It seems doubtful whether the Christian readers of the Apocalypse in the end of the first century would include a sufficient number of persons acquainted with the Hebrew letters and their numerical value to allow the allusion to be at all generally comprehensible if it were based on Hebrew letters. On the other

* Or as Francis translates it—

“ . . . what we hear,
With weaker passion will affect the heart,
Than when the faithful eye beholds the part.

hand, the two Pompeian "graffiti" show that Greek letters were quite commonly used in this way, and, the Apocalypse being written in Greek, all its readers would be able to understand the person meant, if the numerical values of the Greek letters supplied the means of discovery.

To return to Pompeii:—The period illustrated by its remains, and the conditions in which those remains are found, make its case one of special interest. Pompeii was buried in A.D. 79, some fifty years or so after the death of our Lord, and at a time when a great part of the New Testament writings were still quite recent literature, while some had not yet been written, or at all events published.

The Christian Church was struggling into existence and notice, and its power in transforming men's thoughts and lives had already brought upon it severe persecution. The conditions of life and the circumstances in which all this was taking place are of very special interest to us.

In the second place, the remains preserved to us in Pompeii are preserved in a different manner and under different conditions to those which have prevailed in the case of all other places of similar age. Covered up more than 1800 years ago by showers of soft dry volcanic ash, they have been uninjured by any violent treatment, or by the long wasting process of atmospheric change, so that even the colours of wall-paintings uncovered now are as fresh and vivid as they were in A.D. 79, while the rapidity with which these colours now fade when exposed to the air shows how much we have lost in other places in the case of other similar remains where this fading has taken place centuries ago.

A third point in which Pompeii is of exceptional value to students of the past is to be found in the fact that it was a small provincial town and watering-place: the population did not in all probability exceed 20,000, and the town, though now two miles from the seashore, was in ancient times a prosperous seaport town situated close to the beach. Then, too, its position, raised above the fogs of the plain, gave it a clear air, and its situation sloping gently towards the east and south made it a dry and sunny residence in which the heat of a southern sun was tempered by the sea breezes. It resulted from this, that the place became, before the close of the Republic, a resort of Romans of wealth and position, many of whom built or bought villas in the neighbourhood. Among these was Cicero, whose letters contain many allusions to his Pompeian villa.

That Pompeii was a favourite place of residence is a fact of

considerable importance, because it furnishes the reason why the decorations and artistic remains of many of the houses in Pompeii are of more than usual interest.

It is one of the most interesting results of recent investigations (based largely upon inscriptions and archæological discovery) into the conditions of life in the Roman Empire, to discover that our reliance upon the writers of ancient Rome has led us to think too exclusively of the conditions which prevailed in Rome itself, though these differed in many respects from the conditions of life in the cities of Syria, Egypt, or Asia, and even from those in a provincial town of Italy. The intrigues and infamies of the Imperial Court, which bulk so largely in the writings of authors resident in Rome, fade into unimportance at a distance from the "cloaca gentium," while the solid achievements of the Roman Empire, its administrative triumphs, were sometimes greatest under the emperors whose personal character was the worst.

Pompeii, as has already been mentioned, was not a large place. It was a walled town about three-quarters of a mile long and less than half-a-mile wide. The 20,000 inhabitants therefore lived at close quarters: the forum and market-place with all their busy life, the gladiatorial shows and all the other amusements of the amphitheatre, the shops, the baths, and the various temples, were within a few minutes' walk from any man's house.

The limits of time and space permissible for this paper only allow the most general outline of the history of the place. Yet some notion of that history is absolutely necessary to the understanding of the features of its life.

Pompeii was, in origin, an Oscan town, and the Oscan inscriptions found in it furnish us with a great part of our materials for the study of that interesting dialect.*

The place in the Forum still exists where the standards of the measures in use, both dry and liquid, were to be found. The names were originally in Oscan but have now been erased, and the cavities supplying the standard measures of capacity

* The best etymology of the name derives it from the Oscan word "pompe," five. The letter "p" in Oscan took the place of "qu" in ordinary Latin—thus "pod" was the Oscan form of "quod." The letter "o" was often used in Oscan where other vowels appear in Latin. These two facts show that "quinque" in Latin corresponded to "pompe" in Oscan, so that "Pompeii" means "the fives." What particular combination of five led to this name has not yet been discovered.

have been altered from the Oscan to the Roman size.* So also many of the measurements of the older buildings are only intelligible when referred to the Oscan foot, which was shorter than the Roman foot.†

The Oscans were brought by conquest under the rule of the Samnites in the fifth century B.C., but under both Oscan and Samnite rule the influence of Greek art and civilization was predominant in Pompeii, as in other parts of Campania, a fact clearly illustrated by the character of the paintings and bronzes which remain from this period.

Roman rule succeeded in the third century B.C., but it was only in 80 B.C. that the town became completely Roman, a colony of Roman veterans being settled there under the leadership of a nephew of the Dictator Sulla.‡

Analogy with modern instances is a very useful method of making our notions vivid and definite. As a place combining business interests with being a centre of pleasure and recreation, we may compare Pompeii with Brighton (though, of course, Pompeii was much smaller than Brighton), while from the social and ethnological point of view, we may think of a coast-town near the Welsh border where the substratum of Welsh-speaking people was overcome by the Saxons but eventually both Welsh and Saxons passed under the rule of the Normans, the art and literature of the place being almost entirely French or Italian.

Such a town as this was in 79 B.C. sealed up, as it were, by the huge quantities of volcanic ash and dust poured out by Vesuvius in the memorable eruption of that year. It is, of course, a mere popular mistake to suppose that the town was overflowed by *lava* from the volcano. Had that been the case, not only would the heat from the molten lava have destroyed all perishable objects, but the resulting rock would have been so

* An inscription tells us that Aulus Clodius Flaccus, son of Aulus, and Numerius Arcaeus Arellianus Caledus, son of Numerius, *duoviri juridicundo* (i.e., officers combining judicial with administrative functions), in accordance with a decree of the *decuriones* (i.e., the city council), had these measures made equal (i.e., to the Roman measures). This inscription dates from the time of Augustus, about 20 B.C.; it testifies to one of the means used by Augustus towards the unification of the Roman Empire to have a uniform standard of weights and measures adopted throughout the Empire.

† The Roman foot was 11·64 inches, the Oscan 10·82 inches.

‡ The Roman name of the place was *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum*. Needless to say, so cumbrous a name never really replaced Pompeii in general use.

hard and glassy as to make the excavation of the remains nearly impracticable. As it is, the conditions are of the most favourable character. They may be contrasted with those existing in the case of the neighbouring town of Herculaneum. That town was also overwhelmed by volcanic ash from this eruption of Vesuvius, but it was covered to a depth in many places of 65 feet: in the case of Herculaneum, too, the fallen cinders and ashes became drenched with water, and this, under the pressure of the atmosphere, has hardened into a volcanic rock which renders excavations in Herculaneum very costly and difficult. But, in the case of Pompeii, there was apparently no such great amount of steam or water vapour as to bring about the same results. The depth of the covering, too, is only about 18 or 20 feet, and it seems to have been accompanied by only so moderate an amount of rain or other moisture as to form a mass of a soft tufaceous character, easily dug away, but at the same time, hardened by atmospheric pressure to a sufficient extent to make perfect moulds of human bodies and of many other perishable articles, such as eggs, fruit, etc., buried in it. Soft plaster of Paris poured into these moulds has produced casts giving a most accurate reproduction of the original articles, and so furnishing objects of very great interest.

I have spoken of the town as having been sealed up, and the expression seems an appropriate one: the fall of the volcanic ash, while it covered over the wall decorations of the houses and buildings and protected them from the air, did not in any way injure them; and mere ephemeral inscriptions made on the walls with paint, or even with charcoal, were quite fresh and legible when uncovered, though the charcoal inscriptions rapidly disappear when now exposed to the air.

These remains furnish us with a mine of information as to the life, the business, and the amusements of an Italian provincial watering-place in A.D. 79. For instance, while Vitruvius and other ancient Roman writers have described to us all the apartments and arrangements of private houses of different kinds, as well as of public buildings, the actual houses unearthed at Pompeii have in many cases made it possible, for the first time, to understand the technical terms and the details of construction described in their writings.

But the time and space at my disposal are strictly limited, and in such a wealth of detail it is necessary to select a few salient points.

The centre of life and business in Pompeii was the Forum. We are rather apt to connect the Forum in a Roman town too

exclusively with legal business, so that our adjective "forensic" is almost synonymous with "from a legal point of view." But this is a mistake, as the character of some of the principal buildings adjacent to the Forum at Pompeii will at once show.

The Forum of Pompeii was first of all a market-place; here, all day long, tradespeople exhibited their wares, so that the Forum always remained the business centre of the place.

It served, too, as the favourite promenade and lounging-place where men met to discuss matters of mutual interest or to gossip. We can best form an idea of the bustle and activity of the Forum by thinking of what the piazza stands for in the life of a modern Italian city, and bearing in mind how much has been taken from the piazza itself by the cafés, and by the institution of newspapers. All that men now learn from their newspaper and from the constant and animated conversation of the café was in Pompeii centred in the Forum.

The life of the Forum seemed so interesting to one of the citizens of Pompeii that he devoted to the portrayal of it a series of paintings on the walls of a room. These pictures, though not much elaborated, give a vivid representation of the features of the daily life of a small Roman town.

First, in front of the equestrian statues near the colonnade, are represented dealers of every description, shoe-makers, one supplying and fitting women, another men, cloth-dealers and a man selling copper vessels and iron utensils, who sits so lost in thought that a friend is calling his attention to a possible purchaser who is just coming up. Another man is selling portions of food warm from a kettle; then comes a woman selling fruit and vegetables, and a man selling bread.

In another place, a man sitting with a writing tablet and stylus listens closely to what is being said by another man standing close by, just as to-day, more than 1,800 years later, the street letter-writers in Naples write letters for those who are unable to write for themselves.

Other men are very obviously loungers taking a walk, a woman is giving money to a beggar, and two children play hide-and-seek round a column, while, in another place, four men are reading a notice posted on a long board fastened to the pedestals of three equestrian statues.

Although the Forum was practically the open air, the colonnades and adjacent buildings furnished a ready shelter from rain, or from the heat of the mid-day sun; accordingly, it is interesting to observe that in all these scenes all the men are shown with their heads uncovered. The women, on the other hand, are

commonly shown, at all events in public scenes and places, with some sort of covering on their heads.

We are at once reminded of St. Paul's advice to the members of the Christian community at Corinth (1 Corinthians xi, 4-16), and can realize that St. Paul was there urging Christian converts not to add to the unpopularity of their new faith and mode of life by any needless departure from the usual customs of the society in which they lived.

The last scene depicted is one which will arouse mixed memories in the minds of some of the men present here. It is a scene from school life. The schoolboy is to get a flogging. He is "horsed" on the back of another schoolboy while a third holds his legs. A slave is about to lay on the lash. The schoolmaster stands by with an air of severe and dignified composure.

It would appear that Horace's description of his schoolmaster, Orbilius, as "plagosus Orbilius"* is thoroughly borne out by these pictures.

The Comitium at the south-east corner of the Forum, and the Basilica just opposite it, carry our minds to the subject of elections.

The public notices painted on the walls referring to elections and public offices are some 1,600 in number, a fact which shows very clearly the interest excited by these elections and the importance which was attached to them. The ordinary form of an election poster in the earlier Pompeian days was, to take one example—Publium Furium duumvirum, virum bonum, oro vos facite. "Pray make Publius Furius duumvir; he is a good man." Another usual form is to describe a man as *d. r. p.*, which stands for *dignum re publicâ*—"worthy of public office." In regard to one aspirant for office we are informed—"hic aerarium conservabit . . ."—he will guard the public treasury. *Mutatis mutandis*, this is a notice that might adorn our walls at this time in connection with the coming elections for the London County Council.

In later notices the recommendations to the electors are authenticated by the addition of the names of those making the recommendation. In the case of one, Claudius Verus, there is an election-poster—Ti. Claudium Verum ii vir. vicini rogant: "His neighbours request the election of Tiberius Claudius Verus as duumvir."

It was an easy extension of this to put forward a candidate

* Ep. ii, 1, 70.

as recommended by a trade-guild, as in an inscription in red paint on a wall—G. Cuspium Pansam aed. aurifices universi rog[ant]. “The goldsmiths unanimously recommend Gaius Cuspius Pansa for the ædileship.”

This method of advocating a man's candidature easily led to sarcastic recommendations by his enemies. There is a painted notice on a wall in Augustales Street—Vatiam aed. furunculi rog[ant]: “The sneak-thieves beg the election of Vatia as ædile”; and according to another notice near by: All the late drinkers (*seribibi universi*) and all the people who are asleep (*dormientes universi*) recommended the election of the same unlucky Vatia.

Another amusing poster runs: Claudium ii vir. animula facit—“Claudius's sweetheart is making him duumvir.”

Modern as some of these methods seem, it does not appear that anyone in the first century had hit upon the idea of a picture-poster.

Other notices deal with ordinary business affairs; one is the notice of the finding of a mare which had strayed; another offers a reward for the recovery of a stolen copper pot and an additional reward for the capture of the thief; there are also advertisements of particular brands of wine, of olives, fish-sauce, pickle and other edibles.

These things should not, I think, be dismissed as mere trivialities. We are apt to think and say that the greater concerns and realities of life, such as Death, Sorrow, Sin, and Heaven, cannot get attention in modern times because of the rush and bustle of modern life, and the extent to which men's minds are taken up with their business, their amusements, and the details of everyday life. It is just as well to be reminded that in every town and city of the Roman Empire the pioneers of Christianity in its first century found the very same difficulties to contend with, that life was then quite as busy and full and interesting to those who lived it as it is now, and that Christianity, a new and unfamiliar mode of thought, advocated to a great extent by poor men, connected in most men's minds with the hated and despised race of the Jews, and without the eighteen centuries of history that lie behind it for us, nevertheless overcame all these obstacles, and is now the greatest and most lasting moral and spiritual influence which the world can show.

But, to pass on. The plan of the Forum shows it surrounded by temples, and the differing characters of these temples in a small town like Pompeii are a thorough object-lesson as to the state, from a religious point of view, of the Roman world in the first Christian century.

The first temple I shall mention is that which is probably the oldest, the temple of Apollo, on the west side. This temple is one about which our information is most complete and satisfactory. The Oscan inscriptions in the temple, together with much other evidence, show that, in very early times, the Oscans of Pompeii received from the Greeks who settled on this coast of Italy the cult of Apollo. The fine large temple dedicated to that god is in alignment with the older streets of the town, but out of alignment with the colonnades of the Forum; and the devices used to prevent this fact from offending the eye show pretty clearly that the temple was built before these colonnades were put up.

Then, again, the building was in excellent order when it was covered up by volcanic ash, and buried out of sight. The eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79 was preceded in A.D. 63 by an earthquake which did great damage to the buildings in the town, many of which were rebuilt between A.D. 63 and A.D. 79, while others were in process of being rebuilt when they were covered up by volcanic ash in A.D. 79. The statues which stood in the court still exist, though they have been removed to the museum at Naples; they form a very interesting series, while the beautiful mosaic flooring has let into it an inscription in the Oscan language, evidently, therefore, a remnant of the temple as it was long before the earthquake. The colonnade about the court was built of tufa and coated with white stucco. It presents an odd mixture of styles, a Doric entablature with triglyphs placed upon Ionic columns, having the four-sided capital known as Roman Ionic.

When, after the earthquake, the restoration of the temple and its colonnade was undertaken, the feeling for the pure and simple forms of Greek architecture was no longer present; the prevailing taste demanded gay and fantastic designs, and the Pompeians improved the opportunity afforded by the rebuilding of the temple to make it and its colonnade conform to the taste of the times. The shafts and capitals of the pillars were alike covered with a thick layer of stucco, and were painted in red, yellow, and blue. We may infer that the Greek element in the city life, which had long before led to the selection for worship of Apollo, the sun-god, the god of the lyre, the embodiment of all that was most artistic in the Greek conception of a deity, had become less influential, and had given place to religious ideas of a grosser, less artistic, and less imaginative character.

This is exemplified by the fact that the most prominent object in the Forum represents another phase of Pompeian

religious thought. It is the temple of Jupiter which towers above the north end of the area of the Forum. This temple dates from some centuries after the temple of Apollo, and enthrones the deities of the Roman Capitol, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The temple itself was left in ruins by the earthquake of A.D. 63, and had not been rebuilt at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. There exists, however, in one of the Pompeian houses a relief representing the north side of the Forum, and showing this temple so that we can restore the building with great confidence.

In the cella of this temple there was found a head of Jupiter, and also an inscription of the year A.D. 37, containing a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the ruling deity of the Capitol at Rome. As the Roman colonies strove to be, in all things, Rome in miniature, each colony thought it necessary to have a Capitolium—a temple for the worship of the gods of the Roman Capitol, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, and this naturally became the most important temple in the city, and exemplifies one important phase of religious worship in a Roman town.

It has been mentioned that a head of Jupiter was found in the cella of this temple. The conception embodied in it is very characteristic. The profusion of hair and beard symbolizes power, and the face shows great force of will, but it is well dominated by alert and all-embracing mind. The forehead expands in a broad arch, the eyes, wide open, look out under sharply cut brows. This deity is not represented as lost in any mystical self-contemplation; but rather as following, with the closest attention, the course of events in some distant place. The ideal of this artist was the wise and powerful king, whose watchful and protective eye sees to the furthest limits of his kingdom.

There could be no self-evolved conception of a deity more appropriate to the practical Roman mind, the mind of a race of soldiers, administrators, and rulers of men.

On the eastern side of the Forum is the temple of Vespasian; this temple was built for the first time after the earthquake of A.D. 63, and was in process of erection at the time of the eruption in A.D. 79.

The subject of Emperor-worship, of which we are led to think by the presence in the Forum of this temple, is one which might itself form the subject of a separate paper for the Victoria Institute. Only three things may be briefly mentioned about it. This temple was of quite recent construction. It was built after the earthquake in A.D. 63, and, since Vespasian's tenure of the

dignity of Emperor was from A.D. 68 to 79, its dedication to him must have been later than A.D. 68. The religious ideal of which it supplies a picture was the latest development of thought in the Roman world. Men were weary of the barren disputes of the different philosophic sects; they saw little reason to prefer one system of words over another. The basis of fact and certainty which the human soul so anxiously seeks for when really and deeply stirred by religious feeling, seemed equally absent from all the systems.

On the other hand, the Roman Emperor stood out as the incarnation of Power. It was no doubt *this*, the possession of despotic uncontrolled power stretching its field of exercise to the limits of civilization, as then known, which drove Emperor after Emperor mad. To the ordinary dwellers in Provincial Italy, and still more to those in the more distant provinces, to whom the Emperor was not a man familiarly known but a name of unbounded power which made itself felt and known at every turn, it must have seemed that this Emperor was the only real and certain Ruler of the World, and therefore the only worthy object of worship.

But to the new-born Christian Church, this was a religion with which there could not be the least compromise. Her pagan persecutors soon discovered this, and the fact furnished them with one of their two tests whether men suspected of belonging to the Christian body did or did not really do so. Would they offer incense to the Emperor and take part in a sacrifice to him as to a deity? and, in the second place, would they curse Christ?

These were the simple tests applied, and they were, of course, conclusive. Their application compelled either a recantation of belief in Christ, or an open and undisguised confession of allegiance to our Lord and to Him only.

I must not dwell further on this point, but these considerations indicate the important part played in the first century A.D. by the system of religious thought of which this temple of Vespasian gives us a concrete example.

The last of the four chief temples, the temple of Isis, is some distance away from the Forum, but it exemplifies a feature of Roman life, the importance of which is receiving increasing recognition. The worship of this Egyptian goddess was closely associated with "Mysteries," and it is now recognized that these "Mysteries" were the vehicle through which all that was spiritual in the religions of the ancient world found expression. The myth of Isis and Osiris embodied the loftiest and purest

conceptions of the ancient Egyptians. These conceptions approached the monotheistic idea of an omnipresent God, and with them was associated a belief in a blessed immortality. The worship of Isis proved the most successful of the pagan cults in maintaining itself against Christianity, with which it had not a little in common, both in doctrine and in emblems. The subject is much too large to be dealt with in this paper, but the point of chief interest to us is that this Pompeian temple of Isis is the only temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess which has come down to us in a good state of preservation. It must have been built soon after 105 B.C., more than 60 years before the erection of any such temple in Rome was permitted. In addition to this we have also at Herculaneum a wall-painting representing a scene in the worship of Isis—the adoration of the holy water.

There are, of course, other temples in the town, but these four: the temple of Apollo, the temple of Jupiter, the temple of Vespasian, and the temple of Isis, standing side by side, give us, as it were, a visual abstract of the various developments of the religious side of human nature with which Christianity in its origin had to contend. We may find a modern analogy in China, where three or four very different forms of religion, each fitting itself to one side of human nature, exist side by side, so that a man may choose that form of religion that suits his particular idiosyncrasy. In such a state of affairs, Christianity, with its claim to absolute truth and demand for acceptance by the whole world, seems to be either an embodiment of mere superstitious feeling or to make ridiculous claims which can never be substantiated.

For all that, Christianity completely conquered its powerful rivals in the Roman Empire, and no Christian believer can doubt that it will repeat its victory in China and elsewhere all over the world.

We turn now to another side of Roman life in the first century—its amusements, and again in this department of our subject there is only time to mention the principal kinds of such amusement, the theatres and the gladiatorial displays in the amphitheatre.

There were in Pompeii two theatres, of which the larger was calculated to hold 5,000 people. It was excavated in the side of a hill and was a building of considerable magnificence. It was, in great part, cased with marble and furnished with marble seats.

It is a noticeable fact that the first regular play represented

in Rome had as its author Livius Andronicus, a Greek of Tarentum, and that the next dramatist in Rome, Gnaeus Nævius, was also from Campania, the province of which Pompeii formed part. Further, we know that there were farces (*fabulæ atellanæ*) acted at Rome, the scene of which was always laid at Atella (whence their name), the Gotham of Campania. Though these farces were acted at Rome, they were always acted in the Oscan language. It is not, therefore, surprising that the theatre in Pompeii can be dated back to the second century B.C., when Pompeii was an Oscan town.

The theatre was open to the air but its southern aspect and the hot brilliant sunshine rendered an awning necessary over the seats of the spectators. The sockets for fixing the great masts which held up this awning are still to be seen.

There is also just outside the theatre a deep reservoir for water, which was used for sprinkling over the theatre to cool the heated building. These sprinklings were called "sparsiones"; and there are still to be seen painted on the walls advertisements of performances in which it is mentioned as an attraction that there would be awnings and water sprinklings (*sparsiones, vela erunt*).

The theatre in Roman as in Greek cities was by no means reserved for dramatic performances only. It was used for public gatherings of the most varied character. We shall at once recall the riot got up by the silversmiths of Ephesus when they "rushed with one accord into the *theatre*" (Acts xix, 29 ff.) and all the proceedings that followed in that building. The smaller theatre only held some 1,500 people. It was permanently covered in, and was probably used for musical entertainments.

I pass on to the gladiatorial displays. These were held in the amphitheatre in the south-east corner of the city. Their extreme popularity with the dwellers in Pompeii is clearly indicated by the number of notices having to do with the gladiatorial games which we see painted in red on walls along the sides of the streets, or even on tombs standing by the roadside, and also by the almost countless "graffiti" both in private houses and public places having reference to combats and to favourite gladiators.

These inscriptions bring so near to us the scenes and excitements of those days that it seems worth while to give several of them.

On a tombstone near the Nucernian gate is the following notice painted in red letters: Glad[iatorum] par[ia] xx Q. Monni Rufi pug[nabunt] Nola K[alendis] Mais, vi. v. Nonas

Maias, et venatio erit. That is to say:—"Twenty pairs of gladiators, furnished by Quintus Monnius Rufus, will fight at Nola, on May 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and there will be a hunt." The hunt mentioned was an exhibition of wild beasts, which sometimes fought with one another; sometimes with men, as the familiar Roman cry "Christianos ad leones" reminds us.

Another similar notice ends with the words: Ven[atio] erit. Maio quin[quennali] feliciter. Paris va[le]. That is: "There will be a hunt. Hurrah for Maius the quinquennial.* Bravo Paris." Paris was no doubt a popular gladiator.

Another notice ends with the words: Venatio et vela erunt: "There will be a hunt, and awnings will be provided."

Beside the general announcement of a gladiatorial display, a detailed programme (*libellus*) was prepared in advance, and copies were sold. Unfortunately, no such copy has come down to us, but we have what is nearly as good, the memorandum which a Pompeian, evidently with plenty of time to spare, has scratched on a wall. There were two such programmes. The second contains details as to nine pairs of gladiators who fought together. It will be worth while to give part of the programme relating to three of these pairs, together with some explanations.

MUNUS · N · IV. iii	Munus N IV iii
PRID · IDUS · IDI[BUS] MAI[S]	pridie Idus, Idibus Mais.
T · M ·	Threx. Mirmillo
v. PUGNAX · NER iii	vicit. Pugnax, Neronianus iii
p. MURRANUS · NER iii	perit. Murranus, Neronianus iii
O · T ·	Holomachus. Threx.
v. CYCNUS · IUL · VIII	vicit. Cynus, Julianus VIII.
m. ATTICUS · IUL · XIV	missus est. Atticus, Julianus XIV
ESS.	Essedarii
m. P · OSTORIUS · LI	missus est. Publius Ostorius LI
v. SCYLAX · IUL · XXVI	vicit. Seylax. Julianus XXVI.

In the first row only the first letter N. of the name of the official who furnished the exhibition (*munus*) is left unobliterated. The fights extended over the four days (May 12th to 15th).

In the first event the two gladiators, Pugnax and Murranus, were both "Neroniani," *i.e.*, they came from the training-school for gladiators founded by Nero. They had both fought three times before.†

* The *duoviri* of every fifth year were called *quinquennial duumviri* and exercised greatly extended powers.

† When a gladiator had never fought before, his name had appended to it the letter T, standing for Tiro, *i.e.*, novice.

The combat was to be between Pugnax equipped with Thracian weapons and armour, *i.e.*, a small round shield and short curved sword or dagger, against Murranus, a Mirmillo, a man who fought with Gallic arms, and had as a crest to his helmet a fish. On the left we see the letters *v. p. m.* added by the writer as showing the result of the fight. *v.* stands for "vicit"—"he was the winner"; *p.* means "periit"—"he was killed," *i.e.*, he was either killed by his opponent in the contest, or else, being beaten and not having so acquitted himself as to please the spectators, was by them condemned to death by the gesture, which has been made familiar to us, of turning the thumbs down. *m.* stands for "missus est," *i.e.*, the gladiator, though beaten, had his life spared by the spectators, who in that case turned their thumbs up.*

In the second pair, Cynus, in heavy armour, was pitted against Atticus, who carried Thracian arms, already described. They are described as "Juliani," which means that they were from the training school founded by Julius Cæsar. Cynus won, but the spectators spared the life of the defeated Atticus, possibly on account of his fourteen previous contests, in most of which he had probably been the victor.

The last fight is particularly interesting to us. Both combatants were "essedarii," *i.e.*, they fought in two-wheeled war-chariots in British (or Gallic) costume. Scylax was, from his name, no doubt a slave. But the name of his defeated opponent, Publius Ostorius, shows that he was a freedman. He had fought no fewer than fifty-one times before, so he was clearly a veteran gladiator, and this may have been the reason why the spectators did not give the death signal in his case.

To my mind this is a very speaking relic of antiquity. It represents such a card as many men to-day take with them to athletic sports for the purpose of marking the winners' names and entering the time in which a race was run, or the height or length of a jump, etc. Only the matter in Pompeii was a series of fights for life by living human beings in the prime of health and strength, and the letters *p* or *m* stood, in one case, for a new lease of life, and in the other for the death on the spot of a man with an immortal soul.

And our holy religion put down this frightful crime. In spite of its wide prevalence, in spite of the great popularity these displays enjoyed, and the cruel lust for blood and excitement

* The same term—"missus"—was used for a soldier who was allowed, after completing an honourable service, to leave the army.

which they fostered, the religion of Love has put an end to them for ever. *Vicisti Galilæe!*

My subject is so full of interest that I have left myself but little time to illustrate [by means of lantern slides] one great and very important part of it, viz., the character and examples of ancient art which we find in Pompeii, in the wall-paintings and mosaics, the statuary, and particularly in the bronzes which have been preserved to us.

And now my time is at an end but not, emphatically *not*, my material. Whole departments of facts illustrating the life of Pompeii have been left absolutely untouched and those dealt with have only been sketched. But perhaps enough has been done to attain the purpose of this paper, viz., to outline the background of a picture of that state of things in which Christianity won its earliest triumph. The conditions of the modern world are in some respects changed, but in others there is a remarkable likeness. It is the boast of Christianity that it is a religion for all the world, not only for all the different races of mankind, that it meets the deepest needs of every class and description of men and women in any one race and in every place. Its message is to that human nature which is fundamentally the same everywhere and at every time under the most different outward conditions; and this being so, we need not have the least doubt that the triumphs of the first century in the ancient world will be repeated in the twentieth and all succeeding centuries and among all the diversified nations of the globe.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN : I am sure that we have listened with interest to Mr. Sewell's valuable paper. Though sharing the general interest which these important discoveries have excited, I cannot say that I am able to throw much light upon the subject, as my specialty, though closely akin, deals with a very different part of the world. A few comparisons, from an Assyrian point of view, may, nevertheless, not be altogether unwelcome.

The great advantage which students of the daily life of the Romans have reaped from the discoveries at Pompeii lies in the fact that the city had a sudden overwhelming, which, though disastrous for its inhabitants, has been of inestimable value to the modern

student. As far as I know, no parallel to this exists; the nearest approach thereto being the case of Nineveh, which, however, was not overwhelmed by ashes from a volcano, but destroyed by fire. The ruin caused thereby had, nevertheless, a similar effect, for the debris from above covered, and in many cases preserved, the objects of art, etc., upon which it fell. Fire, the destroyer, like Vesuvius, became, indirectly, the preserver of what it had spared.

The following are some of the points which struck me whilst Mr. Sewell was reading his paper:—Like the Pompeians, the Babylonians preferred cash-payments, but their contracts are often on a long-credit basis, with the advantage of high interest; indeed, Babylonia was possibly the school in which the Hebrews acquired their commercial knowledge. Dice have, I believe, been found in the ruins of Babylonia and Assyria, but they probably belong to the Græco-Roman period, and, to the best of my recollection, are not loaded. If, however, the Babylonians had dice at an earlier period, they would certainly have gambled with them, as they had a great veneration for numbers. Indeed, it was with them that the great Platonian “number of better and worse births” originated. The names of the Babylonian deities, it may be noted, could be indicated by numerals as well as in the usual ideographic way. Referring to “the number of the Beast” in the Book of Revelation, it is noteworthy that this numeral, “six hundred three score and six,” is composed of the Babylonian *ner* (600), *sos* (60) *āš* (6)—the first 10 times more and the last 10 times less than the sexagesimal unit (*šušu*, *sos*, 60) which enabled the Babylonians to attain such proficiency in problems of arithmetic.

Emperor-worship recalls to the mind of the Babylonian student the fact, that most of the Babylonian and Assyrian kings were regarded as divine. How old the custom of deifying their rulers was, may be judged from the fact that their earliest ruler, Merodach (the Nimrod of Genesis), was also their chief deity in later times. It is doubtful whether the Babylonian and Assyrian kings stood out as the incarnation of power—they were rather the representatives of the gods upon earth. It is interesting to know that the myth of Osiris and Isis embodied the loftiest and purest conceptions of the ancient Egyptians, approaching the monotheistic idea of an omnipresent god, and associating therewith belief in a blessed immortality. In all probability there were at least some in Babylonia who were

monotheists, as I showed in my paper "The Religious Ideas of the Babylonians," read before this Institute; and it seems not improbable, that the Babylonians were more advanced than the Romans in that belief, which consisted in regarding all the deities of their extensive pantheon as aspects of the heavenly king Merodach.

But that which attracts us in Pompeii more, perhaps, than anything else, is the art of the place. This consists mainly of wall-paintings, which, though not masterpieces, show a considerable amount of technical skill. Mr. Sewell has well described many of them, and thrown reproductions of them on the screen. As you know, the art in which the Babylonians and Assyrians excelled was sculpture, which, however, does not by any means show merit equal to that of the Romans. No Babylonian paintings have as yet been found, but the coloured enamelled work seems to have been excellent, and was generally in relief. The Assyrians, on the other hand, went in for wall-paintings generally, battle-scenes and (in all probability) pictures of the chase. It is doubtful whether, like the Pompeians, they ever had pictures illustrating the legends of the gods, but this is not by any means impossible.

Lieut.-Colonel MACKINLAY: I have the greatest pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks. Mr. Sewell has portrayed in graphic style the life of a Roman town more than eighteen centuries ago, and his paper has excited profound interest. From a photograph of the excavated city I notice that the buildings are very close together, and the streets narrow, though straight. I am told that the ancient Babylonian towns were by no means good in sanitation. Perhaps Mr. Sewell can tell us how Pompeii stood in this respect.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

As to the sanitary condition of the city, I have not come across any particular evidence one way or the other. It was a favourite place with Romans of the upper class, situate on the banks of a river; and care was exercised in regard to drainage.

As to Christian influence in the city (a point that must occur to some minds) there is difference of judgment on the part of authorities. Some declare that there "is no trace whatever of

Christianity" in the remains ; and it is significant that Deissmann is silent regarding an inscription pointing the other way, which certain popular writers have described. At the most, the evidence can only show that Christianity was known in Pompeii before the date of the destruction of the city ; and this is not at all improbable, nor does it add materially to our knowledge.