THE PORTRAYAL OF CHRIST.

BY THE EDITOR.

(CONTINUED FROM THE DECEMBER NUMBER.)

The pictures of Christ as Orpheus or as the good shepherd are not yet to be understood as portraits, but merely as symbols. While Christianity grew in power it broadened in spirit, so that the Christian prejudice against art as idolatry was lessened, and when paganism had practically disappeared the desire to have portraits of Christ could at last find unimpeded satisfaction.

The symbolic representation of Christ as the good shepherd is of special importance because from it developed the first conception of a portrait of Christ himself. The good shepherd became the prototype of a picture of Jesus simply by the omission of the lamb, and so some of the oldest attempts at portraying him in human form which originated in the middle of the fourth century show him as a beardless youth, a shepherd boy, as for instance on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, whose death is definitely determined by the inscription as having taken place in the year of the consuls Eusebius and Hypatius, 450 A. D.

Most of the scenes on the sarcophagus can be easily identified. Here, as in most of the Christ-representations of this type, Jesus can always be distinguished from other characters by the scroll he carries in his hand. In the center of the upper row Christ is enthroned between the apostles Peter and Paul. His feet rest on the personification of the vault of heaven. Underneath, Christ is passing from Jericho to Jerusalem. We see the head of Zaccheus in the sycamore tree among the branches, while some other person is spreading out a mantle on the pathway. To the right of this group we see Daniel in the lions’ den, and to the left Adam and Eve after the fall. In the upper row in the left corner is the scene where Abraham is prevented from sacrificing Isaac, by his side the lamb which is to serve as a substitute. In the upper right-hand corner is Christ
offering to wash Peter's feet. The next niche seems to represent Christ on his way to Emmaus between the two disciples. In scenes of the passion, as for instance in the second group from the left in the upper row, Christ is bearded.

THE SARCOPHAGUS OF JUNIUS BASSUS.
In the Vatican.

A fine fresco showing the youthful Christ in company with four saints has been discovered in the catacombs of St. Callistus and transferred to the Lateran. The saint on the extreme left
points to a star, presumably the star of Bethlehem. Christ holds a book in his left hand and a box with three scrolls stands at the left side of his throne. The picture shows too many traces of a later restoration and in this shape can scarcely be regarded as a true original.

A sarcophagus in the church of St. Ambrosius in Milan shows Christ enthroned in the midst of the twelve apostles who like himself are beardless and are clad in Roman tunics. In this relief he seems to be expounding from an open book which here takes the place of the more usual scroll.

On one relief on a sarcophagus of Arles, fully described by the French archeologist Le Blant in his Sarcophages d'Arles, Christ with a scroll in his left hand again is represented seated in a teaching attitude, while his disciples crowd around listening to his words with marked attention, two being prostrate, and two in token of worship covering their faces with kerchiefs.

Such beardless Christs are preserved on many sarcophagi and elsewhere, and the type continues down to Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo's Last Judgment. Most of the apostles were represented as bearded men of rather advanced age, while the Christ of this conception always remains their junior and appears sometimes even as a youth after the fashion of the good shepherd.
One instance of many others portrays the youthful Christ in the act of handing the keys to St. Peter. It is shown in a relief on a small silver jug in the Vatican museum.

Among the sarcophagi in the Vatican, the one of Probus and Proba contains five niches. In the central one Christ is standing between Peter and Paul on a mount from which four streams of water proceed, while the other niches, all formed by arched columns, are filled with eight apostles, two in each niche. Christ himself is beardless, holding in his right hand a cross adorned with gems and in his left a scroll.

The Lateran possesses the richest collection of sarcophagi ex-
SARCOPHAGUS OF THE TWO CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.
About 500 A. D. Lateran Museum.
hibiting Christ figures both bearded and not bearded, the latter being by far in the majority. The sarcophagus of two bearded men, presumably brothers, contains a number of scenes typical of early Christian thought, such as the resurrection of Lazarus, the denial of Peter indicated by the crowing cock, the sacrifice of Abraham, the washing of feet, Daniel in the lions' den, the healing of the blind, the miracle of feeding the multitudes, etc. The scene in the lower row on the left side may be Christ's discussion of the resurrection with the Sadducees, but we must confess that we do not understand the scene immediately beneath the portrait of the two men. It is noticeable that here Jesus is always portrayed as a youth.

The sarcophagus of a Christian couple in the Lateran of the same period shows the Trinity as three bearded men creating Eve from the rib of Adam who lies asleep on the ground. But the lesson in offering a lamb as sacrifice is given to Adam and Eve by a beardless man, by Christ. Underneath are represented the adoration of the magi and Jesus healing a blind man. On the right of the upper row Christ changes water into wine, multiplies the loaves and fishes and calls Lazarus back to life. In the lower row Christ rebukes Peter for his denial and in all these scenes Christ is beardless like the lamb-bearing shepherd boy.

The same conception of a beardless Christ prevails also in many pictures and mosaics. Perhaps the grandest one is in the mosaic of St. Aquilinus in Milan, where the youthful Christ is enthroned
in the midst of the twelve apostles, most of whom are bearded and further advanced in years than the Christ himself.

Another youthful Christ is preserved in a terra-cotta medallion in the Biblioteca Barberiniana, which is the oldest representation extant of the last Judgment. Christ is enthroned with three apostles on either side. Below the throne are the multitudes hailing
him as the people of that age might greet a new emperor on his accession to power, but the Christian character of this piece of terra-cotta is assured by the christogram and the dotted cross engraved on stones lying at the right side of the throne.

In a niche on a sarcophagus in the Lateran we see represented an interesting scene which is called "Christ crowned with thorns." The figure of Christ is represented in the traditional style holding a scroll in his left hand, but here as with the good shepherd we possess the imitation of a pagan prototype. It resembles the scene of a Roman prince being greeted by the people or by his army with the title "Imperator" or "Caesar" in recognition of some triumph and crowned with a wreath. The attitude of Christ is too peaceful and lordly to be regarded as suffering an outrage, and the soldier who holds the crown over his head is much too respectful to be considered
as doing an act of mockery. There is a similar scene on the triumphal column of Trajan where the emperor stands in exactly the same attitude while he is crowned by a Victory.

The beautiful sarcophagus of Perugia also represents Christ as a youth, but here the situation demands it, if the current interpretation is correct that the scene represents the child Jesus among the doctors in the temple at Jerusalem. If that be so we would be justified in identifying the two figures in the first niche on the right hand of Jesus with Mary and Joseph. The upper frieze of the sarcophagus bears in the corners the portraits of the deceased couple for whom the sarcophagus was intended. Further we notice Noah in the ark receiving the dove with the olive branch, and scenes from the life of Jonah. The winged children are apparently cupids and
not angels, and bear witness to how long a time it took for pagan conceptions to die out.

AN EIKON OF THE GREEK CHURCH.

Quite similar in design is a sarcophagus of the Lateran which also shows seven niches of the same construction and presents the
beardless Christ in the center prophesying that Peter will thrice deny his master before the cock crows. The attitudes of Christ himself, of Peter who asserts that he will not be guilty of such an offence, of John’s astonishment at the mere thought of a betrayal, are well expressed in spite of the awkward lack of proportion, especially in the hands of these three figures. (See page 33.)

A development similar to that of the Veronica idea, in so far as a picture is held by supporters in an attitude of displaying the emblem of their faith to the world, appears in some paintings of the Greek church. We here reproduce one of these in which the archangels hold up a picture of the youthful Christ in a twelve-pointed star formed by four intersecting triangles. Christianity has here become the emblem of the government of the state, for the three archangels represent the three functions of the administration. In the center Raphael as the representative of the church and the clergy takes the most prominent place. On the left-hand side, standing on the right of the eikon, is Michael the representative of the military power, while the civil government represented by Gabriel supports the left side of the star. Here the Christ picture is not the suffering Christ in the Veronicas but is the idealized divinity, God’s vicegerent on earth from whom the secular government derives all its power. The inscription reads in Greek, “The assembly of the archangels”:

\[ \text{ἡ σύναξις τῶν ἄρχαγγέλων.} \]

This picture is peculiar in one respect. It represents Christ with wings like an angel which is exceptional in Christian art.

The idea of representing the church as a ship suggested to Christian artists the conception of Christ as a helmsman, an idea which appears first in the third century as indicated by passages in Hippolytus (De Antichristo, Chap. 59) and in the Apostolic Consti-
tutions (Book II, Chapter 57). On a broken piece of a sarcophagus discovered in Spoleto we find Jesus seated at the helm, rudder in hand, while the evangelists ply the oars. Matthew is broken off, but Mark, Luke and John are identified by inscriptions. The face of Jesus is somewhat injured.

![Image of a fresco depicting Jesus and the apostles as a ship]

**THE CHURCH AS A SHIP.**
Mural painting in St. Callistus.

In a fresco in the catacomb of St. Callistus the pious man is standing on the prow of a ship; Jesus, emerging from the clouds in heaven, lays his right hand in protection on his head, while another man is struggling in the water. This obviously means that the faithful believer will be saved from shipwreck while the infidel is left without help at the mercy of the surges.⁷

⁷V. Schultze sees in this picture an illustration of Paul's shipwreck, but if that had been the artist's intention there would have been a crew on board the ship instead of but one man at the rudder, and the artist would have adhered more closely to the representation of other details. Possibly we are here confronted with an illustration of the Jonah story.

[to be continued.]