

## Callistus Bishop of Rome

Hippolytus claims that he saw through his adversary's deceit, and that Callistus was furious in consequence, treating Hippolytus and his friends as ditheists. On the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus became bishop of Rome (217-222). He began by excommunicating Sabellius for fear of Hippolytus, and to put on an appearance of orthodoxy. "Nevertheless," continues Hippolytus, "as all the world knew that Callistus accused us of ditheism, and as moreover Sabellius reproached him for being a turncoat, he invented the following heresy":

The Word is the Son himself, the Father himself. There is only one and the same indivisible spirit, except in name. The Father is not one thing and the Son another: they are one and the same thing, the divine Spirit which fills all things above and below. The Spirit, made flesh in the Virgin, is not other than the Father, but one and the same thing. Hence Scripture says: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (*John* xiv, 11). The visible element, the man, is the Son; and the spirit which dwells in the Son, is the Father. I will not speak of two gods, the Father and the Son, but of one alone. For the Father who rested in the Son, having assumed flesh, divinised it in uniting it to himself, and made it one with himself, so that the names of Father and Son apply to one and the same God. The personality of God cannot be duplicated; consequently, the Father suffered with the Son.<sup>i</sup>

(The History of the Primitive Church: Volume III, The Church in the Third Century, Part I, by Jules Lebreton and Jacques Zeiller, translated by Ernest C. Messenger, London, Burns Oats & Washbourne, 1946, 602)

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<sup>i</sup> *Philos.* IX, xii, 16-19. Hippolytus then criticises Callistus for forgiving sinners. In Book X he returns to the Trinitarian doctrine of his enemy. X, xxvii, 3-4: "This heresy (of Noetus) has been defended by Callistus, whose life we have exactly related, and who himself brought forth a heresy: he started from that, and confessed that there is only one (god), the Father and Creator of the universe; He is Son inasmuch as he is so named, and receives this appellation, but in essence (*ousia*) there is only (one spirit); for, says he, God is not a spirit other than the Word, nor the Word other than God: there is therefore only one single person, distinguished in name but not in essence. He says that this Word is the sole God, and that He was incarnate. And he will have it that the one we see and touch in the flesh is the Son, and He who dwells in him the Father..