



Mani, the Gnostic Apostle of Light (216-277)

Until the 20th century, most of the Western world's concept of Manichaeism came through Augustine's polemics against it after his conversion to Christianity, which included long theological debates with Manichaeans, which were completely recorded in writing. It is speculated by some modern scholars (Alfred Adam, for example), that Manichaean ways of thinking had an influence on the development of some of Augustine's Christian ideas, such as the nature of good and evil, the idea of hell, the separation of groups into elect, hearers, and sinners, the hostility to the flesh and sexual activity, and so on.

The extent of influence that the Manichaeans actually had on Christianity is still being debated. It has been suggested that the [Bogomils](#), [Paulicians](#), and the [Cathars](#) were deeply influenced by Manichaeism. However, the Bogomils and Cathars, in particular, left few records of their rituals or doctrines, and the link between them and Manichaeans is tenuous. Regardless of its historical accuracy the charge of Manichaeism was levelled at them by contemporary orthodox opponents, who often tried to fit contemporary heresies with those combatted by the church fathers. The Paulicians, Bogomils, and Cathars were certainly [dualists](#) and felt that the world was the work of a [demiurge](#) of Satanic origin (Cross), but whether this was due to influence from Manichaeism or another strand of [Gnosticism](#) is impossible to determine. Only a minority of Cathars held that the evil god (or principle) was as powerful as the good god (also called a principle) as Mani did, a belief also known as absolute dualism. In the case of the Cathars, it seems they adopted the Manichaean principles of church organization, but none of its [religious cosmology](#). [Priscillian](#) and his followers apparently tried to absorb what they thought was the valuable part of Manichaeism into Christianity.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manichaeism>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mani_\(prophet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mani_(prophet))

<http://essenes.net/subindexmani.htm>