

SPRING 2003

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# Dualism

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**D**ualism has been a feature of many religions and philosophies. Recognizing that the universe has both spiritual and physical aspects, dualism typically views the spirit world as good and the physical world as evil. But because the Hebrew Scriptures present the physical creation as good (Genesis 1:31) and also hold that evil spirits exist (1 Samuel 16:14), those who espoused dualism rejected the Old Testament out of hand. New Testament writings are based on the same principles, however, so that only by distorting them could they be used to support dualism.

Dualism was the basis for many Eastern religions, as well as for Manichaeism. It also held an important place in Greek philosophical thought from Plato onward, and it influenced the developing church, giving rise to ascetic, monastic and begging elements, all of which sought to downplay the physical while enhancing the spiritual.