

[1960. Review of *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, by Herman Dooyeweerd. *Christianity Today* 29 Aug.]

MODES OF THOUGHT

In the Twilight of Western Thought, by Herman Dooyeweerd (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960, 195 pp., \$3.50), is reviewed by Gordon H. Clark, Professor of Philosophy, Butler University.

According to the author, all philosophers construct their different theories on the common ground of objective fact. These facts are not ordinary facts, such as the discovery of America or the sum of two numbers, but they are the “structural data” from which philosophy starts and to which it must conform. “One of the first structural data of human experience is the fundamental modal diversity of this experience. ... My transcendental view of the mutual relation between the fundamental modes of experience is capable of verification by those who do not share my starting point” (p. 57).

These irreducible modes, which all philosophers must accept, seem to be 15 in number, “Our temporal empirical horizon has a numerical aspect, a spatial aspect, an aspect of extensive movement ... followed by the economic, aesthetic, juridical, and moral aspects, and finally by the aspect of faith or belief” (pp. 7, 122).

The failure of other systems of philosophy, not only ancient pagan and modern secular philosophies but also the nominally Christian philosophies of Augustine and Aquinas, derives from their “absolutizing” of one or another of these fifteen modes.

For example, time has usurped faith, so that some ask whether the days of creation are 24-hour days or six geological ages. These days are neither the one nor the other, for “God's creative deeds surpass the temporal order. ... It was God's will that the believing Jew should refer his six work days to the six divine creative acts ... and it eliminates the scholastic dilemma concerning the exegesis of the six days of creation ...” (pp. 150-151). Thus Scripture is not to be taken literally or univocally, for some of Scripture is just legend (p. 68), but it is to be interpreted “analogically.”

The analogical meaning apparently comes in a revelation. Creation, and presumably other parts of Christian belief, are not to be understood intellectually, but are revealed in our

“heart.” This revelation “does not occur in any individualistic way, but in the ecumenical communion of the Holy Spirit ...” (p. 186).

Not having had the same revelation as the author, the reviewer wonders whether the universe has had a finite past in astronomical time, or whether it is as eternal as God.

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