Het bijbelse personalisme van prof.dr. Ph. A. Kohstamm. Ontstaan en grondslagen
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SUMMARY

After a short introduction the author describes the life and works of the great many-sided Dutch scholar Ph. A. Kohnstamm (1875-1951) up till about 1930. He then gives a detailed review of his theology up to his death and the main features of his philosophy. In chapter I it is shown that impressions of his youth have exerted a great influence on his works and life. Materialist as a student, he becomes an Idealist under the influence of Bellaar Spruyt but only temporarily. In his inaugural address of 1908 as Van der Waals's successor his Personalism already becomes evident. Chapter II deals in fact with 'the philosopher in the physicist'. In 1913 Kohnstamm became a Christian and from that time onward his Biblical Personalism develops. In 1919 he becomes a professor in philosophy of education, but he does not resign as professor of physics until 1928. Chapter III deals extensively with the writings of this period concerning politics, natural philosophy, philosophy of education and philosophy till about 1925. Chapter IV mentions Kohnstamm's place in European philosophy; the author shows that Kohnstamm was the first Biblical Personalist and not Ebner or Buber. Moreover it appears here that Biblical Personalism is not to be reconciled with Neo-Calvinism. Chapter V deals with this theology in detail and it appears that Kohnstamm's Biblical Personalism is the centre of his theology. Faith is primarily a matter of trust. The Church, the Bible and confessional writings have no absolute authority. The absolute Truth is not a doctrine but a Person, Jesus Christ, Whom we meet in the New Testament and to Whom we stand in the 'I-Thou' relation. Kohnstamm tries to reformulate the doctrine of the Trinity, which he accepts. Concerning Christology he does not go further than the Mystery: Christ is both God and man. The Cross shows us the 'objective dualism' in God. God also suffers; the punisher suffers more than he who is punished. Christ's resurrection is in fact remission of our sins and hope for our resurrection. Kohnstamm passionately turns against the Greek way of thinking.
in theology, especially against the traditional doctrine of predestination. Behind this non-biblical doctrine is the 'unmoved God' of Aristotle. Concerning the sacraments Kohnstamm takes up a place of his own; marriage is a sacrament and in 1936 he values confession very positively. In philosophy Kohnstamm points to the 'Scale of Truth', the highest truth being the Absolute Truth, Jesus Christ. Dogmatics are central in his philosophy, but are subordinate to the Subjective, to Christ. Various disciplines take various positions in relation to this centre. Kohnstamm is in fact against 'Christian' disciplines, etc. Christian politics are politics cultivated by a Christian, etc. Kohnstamm's Christian philosophy cannot be declared identical with Dooyeweerd's philosophy.

The author deals with Kohnstamm's philosophy and theology descriptively and critically. His work is also seen in the light of the judgments of his contemporaries, who often misunderstood him – which unfortunately still happens today. The author holds the opinion that much of Kohnstamm's thinking is topical, at present even most topical. This work goes into the origin and principles of Biblical Personalism; it is the basis on which a second volume is based – ready in manuscript – which deals with Kohnstamm's political philosophy, philosophy of education, psychology, didactics and pedagogy of religion.