

VOLLENHOVEN'S EVOLVING RESPONSE TO GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

*“To be faithful in little things’ has
always been the evolutionary theory of the
Kingdom of God.”*

D. H. Th. Vollenhoven, 1914

My focus in this paper is prompted by J. Klapwijk’s claim that Vollenhoven was open¹ to modern evolutionary research. My research was exploratory because I did not know well what Vollenhoven held concerning evolution. Given what Klapwijk refers to as Vollenhoven’s “one strict reservation,” I will unavoidably end up limiting myself to Vollenhoven’s reflections on genesis within the kingdoms, but I will also want to address his assessment of those (like Klapwijk) who do not share his reservation in this regard.

With an eye to fleshing out Klapwijk’s suggestion that Vollenhoven opens the door. . . or at least points us in the direction of a door that will/might equip (conservative) Christians with an alternative to “the doctrine of the constancy of types” with an eye to answering these three questions:

- A. What view did Vollenhoven come to regarding genesis within the kingdoms? Is it a dynamic view of living nature?
- B. What were his reasons for rejecting claims that the kingdoms themselves (could have) evolved from each other and even from inanimate matter?
- C. Was Vollenhoven more or less open to modern evolutionary research than is Klapwijk?

¹ The context for J. Klapwijk’s statement in this regard is that Vollenhoven was “much more open to modern evolutionary research than Dooyeweerd” (255). I will limit myself to Vollenhoven in this paper and hence not speak to Dooyeweerd’s position or address Klapwijk’s comparative claim.