The perspective in which the believer sees the story of Abraham, through the history of Israel to Jesus, and the history of the church and the history of their own lives, is an occasion for amazement at the continuity of the identity of discussion about God. It is a perspective which does not go against the historian's picture of history, but it cannot be gained through studies in the history of religion. It arises out of the present worship of God and exerts pressure towards putting thoughts about the Spirit in the church in a separate mental compartment with the appearance and activity of Jesus and the God of Israel and creator of the worlds.

This separate compartment is the so-called doctrine of the Trinity, which should offer decisive theological help for believers and not be a hindrance and an additional difficulty. ... The God who comforts and heals, who brings about liberation and a new creation, is to be found in Israel, in the coming of Jesus and in the sending of the Spirit, with which the doctrine of the Trinity deals.

D. Ritschl in *The Logic of Theology*, 141–143
CHAPTER ONE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL ROOTS
OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the biblical roots of the doctrine of the Trinity relates to
the question of the self-revelation of God. As Hendrikus Berkhof has
said, in revelation “we perceive not just a something, a segment of a
divine mystery, but God himself, his heart, his deepest essence. We see
in a mirror and thus do not see God face to face. But what we see in
that mirror is God himself.”1 If we know God by revelation, this means
that we know him through concrete events and experiences that took
place in the past and is recorded in the scripture. The primordial sto-
dies are basic, but new events and experiences are added—not to undo
the previous ones—but to furnish the community of faith with more
penetrating experiences of the One revealed. In these events and expe-
riences (first of all captured in the Old Testament and later occurring
in a more profound manner as depicted in the New Testament), we
become more acquainted with Israel’s God. He is not the God of our
own ideas, but the God who calls us to an encounter with him: “Come
and see what God has done” (Rom. 10:14–17). As the Bible story unfolds
from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we meet the Father, the
Son, and the Holy Spirit in a manner that maintains the unity of God.

THE TERM ‘TRINITY’ AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE BIBLE

The fundamental question is: is the doctrine of the Trinity biblical?
We have to deal with the term biblical. Just what does it mean to be
biblical? The fundamental notion behind the idea biblical is the notion
that a word or a concept is an actual fact in the Bible, and because

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 105.