

## Chapter Three

### Revelation: The Word That Discloses God's Glory

*A consideration of the modern liberal and conservative understandings of the biblical and theological concept of revelation, presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute of Biblical Theological Seminary, June 8-10, 1983.*

Permit me to begin with a quotation from Leon Morris' book *I Believe in Revelation*, published in 1976:

In the face of a widespread denial of the reality or the relevance of revelation, it is plain that Christians today must do some hard thinking. We can no longer take revelation for granted. Should we reject the whole traditional idea of revelation? Or the ways in which it has been formulated? If so, what do we put in its place? If not, what are we to say of the forceful criticisms that are being put forward? Such questions cannot simply be glossed over.<sup>1</sup>

To what widespread denials and forceful criticisms is Morris referring? What is it in these denials and criticisms that should cause Christians to do some hard thinking? Why can we no longer take the traditional idea of revelation for granted? And how do the traditional (conservative) and the modern (liberal) views of revelation differ?

For a statement of the traditional conservative view of revelation, let us go back to Benjamin B. Warfield's article "Revelation," which appeared first in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* in 1915, and later was reprinted under the title "The Biblical Idea of Revelation" in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Warfield writes:

Revelation ... is the correlate of understanding and has as its proximate end just the production of knowledge, though not, of course, knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of salvation. The series of redemptive acts of