

R5B The revelation ~~thms~~ is thus one of the commonest things in life and much knowledge could never possibly come to us except through revelation. Someone else can look at me; tell how tall I am, how much I weigh, what my complexion is, whether I look strong or feeble, whether my face appears intelligent or unintelligent. But he cannot possibly tell what my name is or when I was born, or the date of the week on which I was born unless I or someone else communicate that fact to him. There are many things which we cannot learn expressly except by revelation.

Yet in common life there are many ways of communication. There are many types of revelation. We communicate with spoken words and with written words. We communicate with an expression of the voice. We communicate with a picture. We communicate in all sorts of different ways. It is possible to say something and to mean the exact opposite and to make this perfectly clear by the tone of voice in which we make the statement.

It is not always easy to understand a revelation. I've had experience in writing, answering students' questions about problems relating to coming to school. It is interesting sometimes to find how the words are understood in exactly the opposite sense in that which they are meant. Sometimes it is possible to show how the words must be taken in the way in which I understood them. In other cases it just seems impossible to convince the person involved that the word did not mean something that it never occurred to me that it should mean. There may be difficulties in understanding the revelation. The mere fact that we have one does not mean in itself that everything is crystal clear or easily understood. Yet we all understand what it means to endeavour to communicate thoughts. In Acts 10 we have the story of Peter at Joppa. Peter is hungry. He's waiting for dinner. He goes to sleep and has a vision. He sees a sheet come down from heaven, containing all sorts of animals. He hears a voice, "Rise up Peter, kill and eat." He says, "not so Lord. I've never eaten anything common or unclean." The sheet is taken up to heaven. Again it comes down and says the same thing to him again. He answers as he did before. This happens a third time. Here is Peter. He's hungry. Here's a sheet with food. Peter is tempted to take it. He hears a voice which he thinks is a Divine voice saying, "Take and eat." It goes against his whole background. He refuses to do it. But then he hears a voice which says, "that which God has cleansed call not thou common." He meditates upon it, wonders what