

A few words from the Vicar

Happy New Year!

Did you know that this year marks the 400th anniversary of the world's best ever selling book? A very special book that is estimated to have sold 1 billion copies since it was first published in 1611.

What's more, you probably own at least one copy of this best seller.

And that book is the King James Bible, otherwise known as the Authorised Version (AV).

Over the centuries the AV has had a profound influence upon the English language and has played a major role in underlining the Christian foundation of our nation.

Did you realise that we quote from the AV if we 'put words into someone's mouth', or see 'the writing on the wall', or 'go from strength to strength', or 'eat, drink and be merry', or 'fight the good fight', or bemoan 'the signs of the times', or find a 'fly in the ointment'.

At the heart of the AV's influence upon our language and culture lies a very simple fact; the publication of the AV in 1611 made the word of God much more accessible to the people of this country than it had been at any time previously in our history. Yes, there had been earlier English translations of the Bible but it was the AV that was taken to heart by the people of these islands.

Then as now, as ordinary people began to read the Bible for themselves they found that they could be moved by the Holy Spirit as they read, marked, learnt and inwardly digested the living words of Scripture. They could feed on God's word and, in so doing, be refreshed, stirred, called comforted, and challenged.

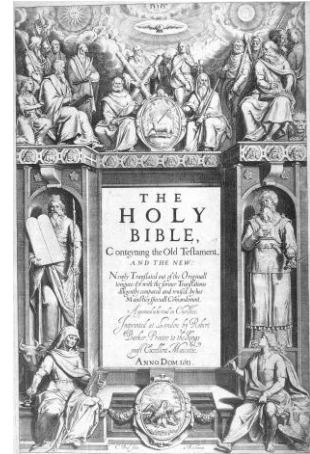
Of course, the English Language has evolved in the 400 years since the AV was first published. Although still recognisable as English, the AV expresses itself in a way that differs in many ways from the way we speak today. Furthermore, Biblical scholarship has moved on and, in recent years, more up to date translations of the Bible have been authorised for use by the Church of England.

Nonetheless, the AV still holds a rightful place in the life of the Church. There is something poetic in its use of English and many people retain a soft spot for the AV. The AV continues to be a best seller and its pages are even accessible via the internet. As a matter of fact each month some 450,000 people use Google to search for King + James + Bible.

Not bad for a book first published in 1611!

Every Blessing

Dave



The title page to the 1611 first edition of the King James Bible.