Bible Sunday 25/10/26

Most day I get sent an email by an organisation hoping to sell me a Bible. They know that I almost certainly have one already but offer new translations, posh binding or editions with helpful notes suitable for various groups of people. So I find it hard to understand that there was a time when there were few Bibles and more importantly they were written in either Greek or Latin. That was less of an issue than it seems to me because although literacy was on the increase there were still a hugh number of people in England unable to read. But most of the people who could would only be able to read in English.

Reading the Bible was for scholars and the rich.

But not everyone thought this was how it should be. In particular, a man called William Tyndale who set about translating the New Testament into English. He felt that when people could read the Bible for themselves, in their own language, it would have more meaning for them.

The idea of ordinary people reading for themselves felt like a threat to the Church and Tyndale was forced to go abroad to finish his work. Once complete it was printed and then copies were smuggled into England sometimes pretending to be text books in other subjects. Tyndale himself was executed possibly ordered by Henry V111 th.

But a year after Tyndale died the Church in England ordered that every parish should buy a copy of the complete Bible in English. This Bible and the King James version that was used in churches until recently were both based on Tyndale's original translation.

This year we are celebrating the 500th anniversary of its publication.