

I am now a few pages into “*Bring up the Bodies*”, the second part of Hilary Mantel’s trilogy about the rise & fall of Thomas Cromwell.

I finished re-reading *Wolf Hall* yesterday and enjoyed it even more the second time around.

Again, I was struck by a passage towards the end of the book, where Cromwell reflects on the fact that he can see change coming.

Over and above the conflict between Henry VIII and Rome, the struggle for ecclesiastical power and the whole saga of Anne Boleyn, a further challenge to the status-quo was gathering strength and momentum.

An increasing number of people had been imprisoned or burned at the stake for having copies of parts of the Bible in English or being responsible for bringing them into the country.

Mantel’s Cromwell senses that it won’t be long until that which was currently punishable by such an awful death would, in fact, become acceptable and lawful.

The consequences of this he acknowledges will be far reaching and widespread as the inevitable winds of change bring a new understanding.

“As the word of God spreads, the people’s eyes are opened to new truths. Until now... they knew Noah and the flood, but not St.Paul..... they did not know the manifold miracles and sayings of Christ, nor the words and deeds of the apostles, simple men who, like the poor of London, pursued simple wordless trades. The story is much bigger than they ever thought it was.... They have seen their religion painted on the walls of churches, or carved in stone, but now God’s pen is poised, and he is ready to write his words in the books of their hearts”.

To have the Bible in English, available to anyone who could read, would be revolutionary.

As we enter another three weeks of so called “lock-down” in our fight against Coronavirus, we hold fast to the fact that this will pass; that there will be an end to it.

In the meantime, I wonder what kind of world will await us when all the restrictions are eventually lifted?

Yes, there will be one big party as we all meet up again and rejoice in being in each other’s company, even as we rightly mourn those who have died and whose families have been affected.

Will it be a case of back to normality and business as usual or might it be the beginning of a time of challenge and change to the status-quo, bringing with it a new way of living?

Having spent so many weeks doing things differently and being forced into thinking about how we live and what is important, will we see that spilling over into our communities and society, enabling us to build a brave new world and see a new era unfolding?

A new way of living in which we give thanks for those in the NHS and all the key workers who have given so freely of themselves and, enabled our nation to keep going and with it a real and long-lasting appreciation for what they have done.

A sense of thankfulness for what we have, rather than what we are told we need to have and must buy.

A contentment and joy in the little things in life that often we were in too much of a hurry to even notice.

An awareness of all that we simply took for granted.

A new way of working, of communicating, or doing business.

A new way of travelling and a new way of using our leisure time.

A commitment to better look after our world, the environment, each other and ourselves.

A more balanced lifestyle and way of living that is as much about being as it is doing, for after all as my sister-in-law Sue said, “We are human beings and not human doings”.

If this change is coming and we are to make the most of this opportunity to make the world a better place, then it is no good simply looking to others to make it happen. It needs to start with us; with you and me.