

Tony Thinking Aloud xlii

*'If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, Winter will have another flight.
If Candlemas Day be cloud and rain, then winter will not come again.'*

Alison, my wife, had a book called Country Companion for her 11th birthday, we have consulted it over the years as a kind of 'Bible of Nature'. The above is a 'weather wise' for Candlemas which is next Tuesday, February 2nd. There are other versions of this weather wisdom, but we always stuck by this one.

Some will still say that a weather wise really applies to ten days later. Remembering the twelve days which were taken out of the calendar in September 1752!

Candlemas is mid-way between the shortest day, December 21st and the traditional first day of spring, March 21st.

So, there is hope and forward thinking just as there is reason for the candles alight in church.

Forty days after the birth of Jesus, his parents followed the tradition of taking the boy to the Temple. There, an old priest, Simeon, who saw Jesus, used the words of the Nunc Dimmittis (Lord now lettest thou servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation). He foretold the child Jesus would be a light to lighten the nations, hence the tradition of a lighted candles at Candlemas.

I am back in Alison's book 'February is called the gateway to the year. In cottage gardens snowdrops hang their white lamps, tiny ivy leaves creep up the wall. While glossy coated blackbirds quarrel about the lady of their choice'.

This was written in the war years, but it could be today, nature does not relate to crisis, Covid or the war years. Nature is the explicit constant of the hand of God. We can take heart and look forward to the spring with a candle of hope and the cheerful snowdrop. We are called to remember in every situation and nature, God is there with us, as we remember all those who support others and each other at this time.