

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

## Fools

**“All that I care is whether he is a wise man or a fool.”**

*William Blake, Jerusalem*

On this “April’s Fools’ Day”, there’s not much inclination to be foolish. Clowning about, playing tricks on folk, may have to be left till next year.

Nonetheless, “April Fools’ Day” can make us think. Practical jokes and hoaxes on April 1<sup>st</sup> have been common in this country since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Scotland it was traditionally “Huntigowk Day”, a “gowk” being a cuckoo or a foolish person. In France it’s “April Fish Day”, when people try to pin a paper fish on someone’s back without them noticing. And in Odessa in the Ukraine, April Fools’ Day is actually a city public holiday!

In Sweden in 1962, national TV broadcast a 5-minute special on how to get colour TV by putting a nylon stocking in front of the screen – including an explanation of the physics behind the phenomenon. We’re told that many thousands of people were duped by this April Fool stunt.

It’s hard to laugh just now. But, someday, we’ll be able to play tricks on one another again, or have a right good belly-laugh. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us: *There is a season for everything*, and goes on to list the contrasting aspects of our lives, like: planting and reaping; keeping and throwing away; loving and hating. But, thank God, the list also includes: tears and laughter; mourning and dancing.

We *will* laugh and dance. Tears and mourning may have their time. But we *will* be able to be fools again, that’s for certain – and laugh, and laugh, and laugh some more.

### **A prayer for today**

*God of all time, when the season is awful, remind me that other times will come.*

*When life is hellish, remind me that heaven will yet be close.*

*When tears are all consuming, remind me that one day – maybe soon –*

*I will be able to be with other fools and laugh again. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>