

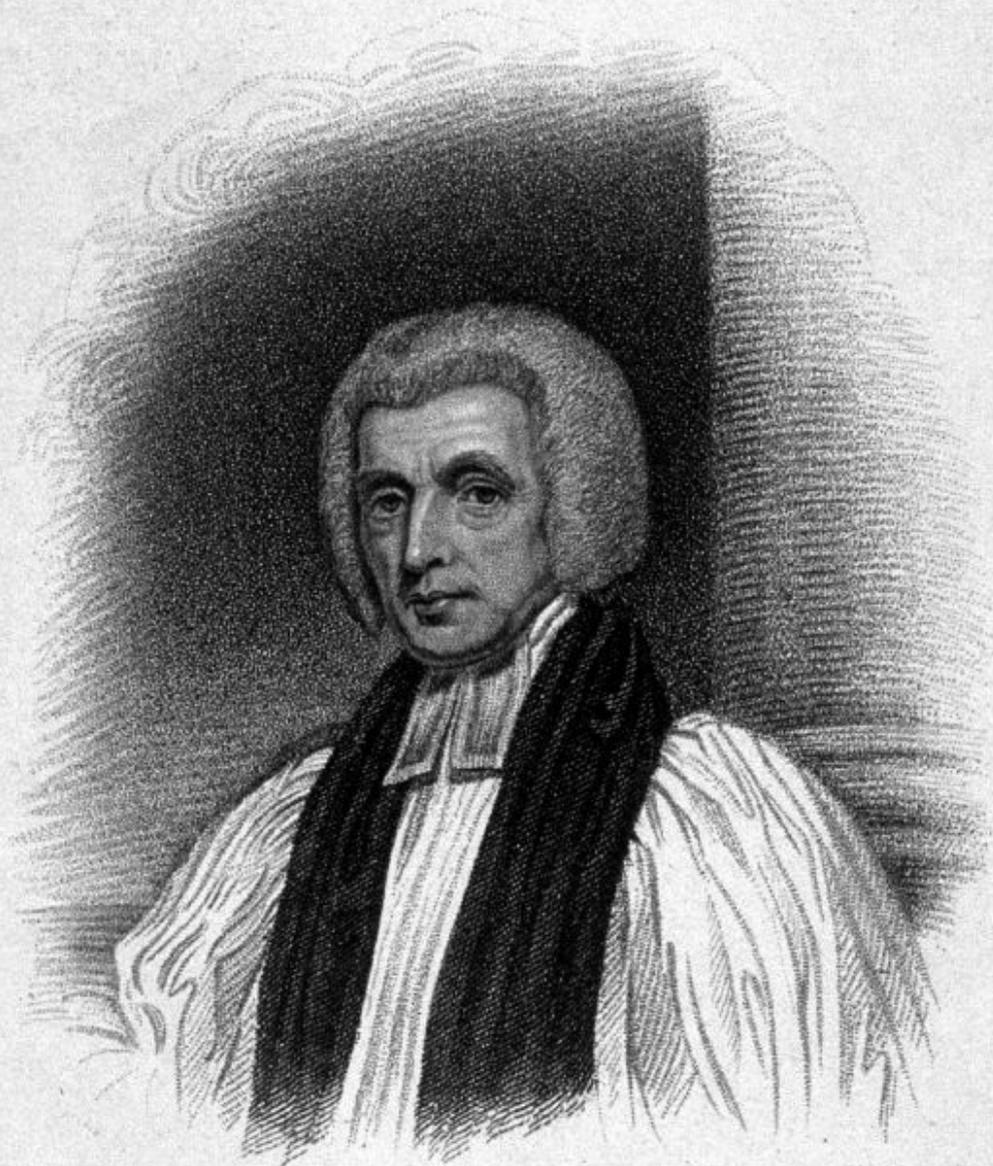


THE BEILBY PORTEUS
MEMORIAL LECTURE

What are British Values?

Michael Turnbull

April 2015



BEILBY PORTEUS,

BISHOP OF LONDON.

Expired April 14th 1809, in his 78th year, at Fulham in Middlesex.—He was born at York, and his remains were interred in a vault at the Chapel at Sundridge, near Seven-Oaks, in Kent.

London: William Darton, 58, Holborn Hill, 1822.

THE BEILBY PORTEUS MEMORIAL LECTURES

Beilby Porteus (1731-1809) was the 116th Bishop of London and made an important contribution towards the fight against slavery. Porteus had a country retreat at Sundridge and lies buried in the church yard of the ancient and beautiful church of St Mary's, Sundridge.

In October 2009, the bicentenary of Bishop Porteus's death, the present Bishop of London, Dr Richard Chartres visited Sundridge. At the request of The Friends of St Mary's, Sundridge, he gave a lecture on Porteus and his work. The lecture aroused a considerable amount of interest. As a result, the Committee of The Friends decided to inaugurate a series of occasional lectures to be called The Beilby Porteus Memorial Lecture. The committee also published a brief life of Bishop Porteus, which is available for purchase.

The lecture series is under the patronage of the current Bishop of London. The lecturer is requested to speak on some aspect of the history of the Church of England. As Dr Chartres commented, "for some time now secular historians have edited out the consideration of the Church from their general accounts of English history, even though it has been a vastly important social institution, as you know."

In 2015 the second lecture in the series was given by The Rt. Rev. Michael Turnbull. Bishop Turnbull was formerly Bishop of Durham, Deputy Lieutenant of Kent and an honorary assistant bishop in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester and Europe. His lecture was entitled "What Are British Values?"

The friend's of St Mary's have great pleasure in publishing the texts of both lectures.

The Friends of St Mary's, Sundridge is a registered charity dedicated to raising money to maintain and enhance the beautiful Church of St Mary's, Sundridge.

President The Right Honourable Sir Michael Fallon, M.P.

Chairman Sir David Milman, Bt.

PORTEUS LECTURE 2015

WHAT ARE BRITISH VALUES?

I don't think it's in Genesis, but Adam is reputed to have said to Eve 'My dear, we live in an age of transition' Eve was very nervous about this suggestion of diversification so every time Adam came home she counted his ribs.

Those two factors - diversity, which has grown over the centuries - and transition, which makes it difficult to be precise about nations and their values - are the core elements with which we have to deal as we approach anything to do with Values. We cannot expect to make a list values and say this is what we have to live by to be British. So I begin with another quotation which indicates that there are problems coming.

He who foresees calamities, suffers them twice over.

I saw a calamity coming a few months ago when I realised that this lecture with its long promised title of 'What are British Values' was due to be given only 13 days before one of the most unpredictable general elections of modern times. As time passed the dangers grew ever more evident. 'British Values' was a phrase on the lips of every politician and I could see the headlines 'Bishop votes for this party or that party'. The resultant call to the carpet of Lambeth Palace would be less preferable to death itself and a good deal more painful. So should I change the title to something more interesting like 'The disturbing history of the Mother's Union' or perhaps 'The inside story of the clerical collar'. I decided against these temptations for a good reason. I am passionate about our nation and its future so I did not want to deviate from my first intention.

But another reason I stuck to my guns was the author of that quotation with which I began

He who foresees calamities, suffers them twice over.

It was of course Beilby Porteus, successively Bishop of Chester and Bishop of London in the 18th century, whose mortal remains lie in this village which he knew and loved as a much needed retreat.

Porteus is now known especially for two things which are both related to what we now call British Values. First his central involvement with the abolition of slavery - a principal of human freedom which we compromise at our peril. Secondly, his

The full text of this lecture can be purchased from
The Friends of St Mary's, Sundridge

