

**SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE
OF LORDS, MARCH 22D, 1832,
ON THE NEW PLAN OF NATIONAL
EDUCATION IN IRELAND**

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Speech delivered in the house of lords, march 22D, 1832, on the new plan of national education in Ireland by Henry Phillpotts

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HENRY PHILLPOTTS

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A
S P E E C H

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,
MARCH 22d, 1832,

ON

THE NEW PLAN

OF

NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND,

BY

HENRY, LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.



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647.

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It was moved by the EARL of WICKLOW, "That inasmuch as
" by the plan of National Education established in Ireland,
" the Bible is practically excluded from Schools formed under
" the sanction of His Majesty's Government, this House cannot
" view the plan with approbation."

S P E E C H,

&c. &c.

MY LORDS,—I can assure the Noble Marquess who has just sat down, that I will adhere to the advice which he has been pleased to give to your Lordships, and will confine myself strictly to the question before the House. I have, in truth, no temptation to wander from it; for the question itself is far more than sufficient for me to hope to do justice to it; and it is besides far more interesting in itself, than any collateral matter could help to make it. My Lords, it is, I can assure your Lordships, felt to be so by thousands out of this House, and by not a few, I trust, within it. It is a question which, as it will be my duty to endeavour to satisfy your Lordships before I conclude, has not only excited, but has also justified, the greatest anxiety and alarm, both in Ireland, and throughout the empire at large.

Before I proceed, my Lords, to enter upon the discussion of this most important subject, I will venture to make one remark in reference to an observation of the Right Reverend Prelate behind me (the Bishop of Chester), for whom I may be permitted to say I entertain the most sincere respect. That Right Reverend Prelate has said that he could not consent, on this occasion, to raise his voice in condemnation of his Majesty's Ministers, although he disapproved of the plan proposed by them. My Lords, I too wish to be

understood, in the observations which I am about to address to you, as meaning to say nothing unnecessarily disrespectful to his Majesty's Ministers. My remarks will be made against the measure, and not against the men. And yet, my Lords, I shall not be restrained by any apprehension of incurring the censure of a Noble Lord who has recently addressed you, of being called factious, or belonging to a faction,—an accusation pretty liberally bestowed of late on those who have considered it their duty, on public grounds, to oppose a public measure,—I say, my Lords, I shall not be restrained by any apprehension of being charged as a member of a faction from speaking as becomes a member of your Lordships' House; and if I shall find it necessary to offer any very strong observations against the measure, I shall not scruple to do so; trusting, that the Noble Earl at the head of his Majesty's Government, and his colleagues, will understand that I wish my observations to apply as little as possible to them, but as much as possible to the measure itself. I say this the more readily, because I do not think that there are many among those Noble Lords, although officially responsible for the measure, who know what that measure really is.

My Lords, I do not make this charge on slight grounds; for when I hear Noble Lords who have spoken in defence of the new plan, particularly the Noble and Learned Lord (Lord Plunkett), declare, that the principle of it has been sanctioned by all the Commissions and Committees that have hitherto devoted their labours to the consideration of this subject, it is plain to my understanding that they know not what this new plan really is. My Lords, instead of being the same in principle as that which has been

recommended by the Reports of previous Commissions and Committees, I affirm, that the present measure not only has not the sanction of those Reports, but is in direct opposition to them all. If, therefore, my Lords, I establish this point to the satisfaction of your Lordships, I think I shall stand excused for saying that I very much doubt, or rather I do much more than doubt, whether the Noble Lords know what this measure really is.

My Lords, I will now beg leave to refer to the letter addressed to the Noble Duke at the head of the New Board of Education, whom I am most happy to see in his place, from the Right Honourable the Secretary for Ireland; and I will beg leave, from that letter, which is the formal and official exposition of the new plan of national education in Ireland, to show what that plan is. It may be considered as dividing itself into three distinct particulars, as respects—first, the moral and literary instruction which it is proposed to afford to Protestants and to Roman Catholics in common; secondly, the separate religious instruction of Protestants; thirdly, the separate religious instruction of the Roman Catholics. From an examination of these several parts, I will undertake to show, that the real principle of this national plan of education is to exclude Scripture altogether from some of the schools supported by the State; and to lay the least possible stress on Scripture as a part of that education in all. In truth, my Lords, strange as it may seem, this official exposition of the plan, I mean Mr. Stanley's letter, from the point at which it commences the development of his plan, is so constructed, as to avoid the very mention of Scripture at all.