

enable him to perform those duties with proper weight and authority." The Dissenting clergy were wholly supported by voluntary contributions—in what respect were they inferior to the clergy supported by compulsion? So much for the practical utility of the established church. His next point was one which required little education, the very existence of the established church itself being a decided proof of the right and the practice of interference with the revenues of the church on the part of the legislature. The established church was called a national church—that is, an institution intended to promote the national benefit; on the face of it, therefore, it was at the disposal of the nation. It was a corporation, possessing certain trustee rights and privileges to be exercised for the benefit of the granting party, the public. By every rational principle, therefore, it was as much under the controul of the public as the Bank of England or any other corporations in the state. To be sure they heard a great deal touching vested rights. But whose vested rights were meant? Not the vested rights of the nation at large, but the clergy. Were they prepared to maintain that the clergy were themselves the church?—that they were anything more than ministers—servants in the service of the church, which was the congregation, the people. But it was needless to argue the question on its abstract principles. (Hear, hear, hear, and cheers.) Henry the VIII. and his immediate successors, had decided the question; and the principle of legislative interference had been repeatedly acted upon since the revolution. By the 27th of Henry VIII. all monasteries and religious establishments under £200 a year in value were taken possession of by the crown. "The lion having slaughtered the carcass" to use the forcible words of Mr. Burke, "threw the offal to the jackalls in waiting. It was curious to trace the history of these official gifts of Henry. Almost all the church property of his time was bestowed by him, his minions and the aristocracy; their descendants lorded it on those possessions still. The 37th of Henry VIII. and the 1st of Edward VI. were other decisive instances of parliamentary controul of the revenues of the church. The 3d of William and Mary acted upon the same principle in substituting a rate of 5s per acre for a tithe upon flax, as did the 40th of Geo. III. relative to agistment ex pteptions. Still more complete was the statute of Geo. I. for regulating the stipends of curates; a principle which he was sure the aristocracy would not admit to be applied to their own bailiffs, or stewards, or servants. But, in fact, it was an insult to common sense to seem to doubt the right of parliament to manage the revenues of the established church as it thought most advantageous to

the public. To what did that established church owe its existence but legislative interference with ecclesiastical revenues, and surely an act of parliament could alter and amend another? Indeed it was because it could do so that he always thought an act of parliament title the worst one could have for any possession as circumstances might recommend another distribution. The emoluments of the clergy were not vested in them; it appeared that the judges of the land had decided that in the case of an insolvent parson the emoluments of his living did not vest in the assignees, but were to be treated as the half pay of an officer. Up to the period of the Protestant reformation the clergy were considered to be entitled to only one third of the tithes, which were divided into three parts—one for the church, one for the poor, and the other for God's servants. The greater part of our church revenues were derived from our Catholic ancestors, and had been transferred to the Protestant clergy by act of Parliament. Could this have been done if they were not national property? The hon. member then proceeded to inveigh against the anti-Christian character of the exorbitant church revenues of England, and to liken the church of England, in this particular, to that of Rome. Many hon. members urged a system of reduction of taxation upon ministers. But what was the noble lord to do? Was he to sponge out the national debt, or to put down the army? If the national debt was to remain, if the army was to remain, and the navy was to remain, it was the highest inconsistency to call upon his Majesty's ministers to reduce taxation. By his plan the national creditor might be relieved, and the people might be relieved, but it was impossible to carry on the present system without some appropriation of the public property. The hon. member then moved his resolutions:

Mr. COBBETT seconded the motion.

Lord ALTHORP said that the house would hardly expect that he should answer the speech of the hon. member. (loud cheers.) He should merely say that, as the hon. member was a Dissenter and he (Lord Althorp) was a churchman, it could be easily understood that in a question whether the church of England was a good church or not they must differ (hear.) There was another point on which they differed. The hon. member said that this was a motion of great importance; he differed from him in that (cheers and laughter.) He should therefore not detain the house by attempting to enter into discussion which however it might be said a polemical assembly was hardly fit for the consideration of that house (cheers).

Mr. COBBETT observed that the noble lord had said that the house would hardly expect him to answer the speech of the hon.

member. He [Mr. Cobbett] did not expect him to answer it either.

Mr. D. W. HARVEY said that, although he was a Dissenter, and had been educated as a nonconformist, and was prepared to subscribe to the abstract proposition of the hon. gentleman, he could not agree to it in his terms, for he had prejudiced the discussion and injured the principle of the argument he had laboured to establish by pointing out the abuses of the church instead of insisting on the paramount right of the Protestant Dissenters to the exercise of private judgment.

Sir R. INGLIS rose to record his dissent from every word of the position of the hon. member, and to make one observation upon this system of sermon and speech [hear, hear, and laughter].

Mr. AGLIONBY spoke in opposition to the motion

Mr. O'DWYER, amidst cries of "withdraw," said that as a Catholic he could not agree to the resolutions and pressed the following amendment—"That the revenues of the church of England had been always subject to legislative enactments, and ought to be appropriated to the purposes of their original institution."

Mr. HARVEY, as a protestant Dissenter, could not agree to this amendment—at least the second part of it.

After some observations as to the mode in which the question should be put.

Mr. O'DWYER withdrew his amendment.

The original question was then put: not an "ay" was uttered, and the Speaker said the "noes" had it.

A few voices said "The ayes' have it" [the usual call for a division]: but

The SPEAKER said that this was too late, for there was not a single "aye."

Sir R. DONKIN presented a petition from Berwick upon Tweed for the abolition of all useless pensions and sinecures, and for the renewal of the assessed taxes.

JEWISH DISABILITIES.

Mr. ROBERT GRANT—in a speech of considerable length moved the following resolution—"That it is expedient to remove all disabilities at present, existing with respect to his Majesty's subjects, professing the Jewish religion, with similar exceptions to those provided with respect to his Majesty's subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion."

Sir ROBERT INGLIS regretted that his right honourable friend, by whom the present motion had been introduced, should have made such large concessions to the spurious liberality now so fashionable. He never had expected that the right hon. mover would have brought in a proposition the effect of which would be to open every avenue to political power to the Musselm from Madras, the Parsee from Bombay or the Brahmin from Calcutta.