

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON RITUALISM.

The Ritual commission, that is to say the commission appointed by the Queen to enquire into the innovations introduced by a party in the English Church, has been appointed, and throughout a long series of days, has examined men of all parties and shades of opinion. So long did it sit, and patiently examine, and interrogate, and discuss, that Lord Shaftesbury, who expected that it would at once snuff out all that was distasteful to his Puritan feelings, fairly lost his temper, and was betrayed into vehement abuse and unseemly anger; but after all their patient investigation, we can only when we read its report, repeat once more the words so often applicable to Royal Commissions,

Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

Yet it cannot be said the Commission has done no good, because, although the Report is very strikingly like to the *ridiculus mus*, yet the evidence so patiently and faithfully collected is of the very utmost value. Some idea of the great interest taken in the question may be gathered from the fact, that two editions of the "blue book," which contains a full account of its whole proceedings, were sold in two days: and from that book persons capable of forming a judgment in the matter, can collect the necessary material; it remains to be shown which way the publication of it will influence the state of public feeling in England. Moreover, there is another great advantage accruing from the commission, and one which all humble Christians, whatever be their individual views, will appreciate: it tends to gain time. Lord Shaftesbury and vehement partizans, who are firmly convinced that nothing can be right of which they do not approve, and who value their own view of the truth far beyond the truth itself, do not want to gain time; and the very fact that they do not want to gain time casts suspicion on the views they advocate: but those who value truth above everything, who feel that,

Veritas est fortis, et prævalebit.

and prefer the triumph of truth to the triumph of their own views, think very differently. There are those who desire to attain to truth, even though the truth convict them of error; and such as these are seeking now in the discussion of these great questions to gain time; they do not desire to crush one party, or the other, they seek the truth only, knowing that by the truth the God of truth is best glorified. And that the truth may be attained there is need of time, time that we may see which way the finger of God is pointing, time that we may discuss judiciously, impartially, religiously. Few questions that have arisen in the Church in modern days, need more carefully or gently handling; it is no doubt the easiest and simplest course to take one side of the question, to attach oneself to one of the great parties of the day, and blind to all else to follow its dictates, but such a course as this will not satisfy an impartial mind. Independently of the merits of the question itself, about which much may be said, this difficulty