

## "BRINGING."

In our last number we published a circular from the Committee on the augmentation of Ministers' stipends. In connection with this subject, we earnestly ask our readers to give attention to the following article, which we take from the *Evangelical Witness and Presbyterian Review*, a periodical published in Belfast. The writer after referring to the question "How is the income of Ministers to be best collected," and the various modes adopted in different congregations for this purpose proceeds as follows:—"It is surely of importance to inquire whether the Scripture, the only rule of faith and practice, says or hints anything on this subject. Ever since God has had a Church in the world, His people have honoured Him with their substance, and this they have done specially in the maintenance of those who have ministered about holy things. Means have been wanted at all times for the carrying on of God's work, and money has been demanded by Him from His people, and the simple question is, 'in what way has it been collected.'

"Those who have not examined the matter may be surprised to learn that there is one way, and only one, of gathering for God's service approved of in His Word, and that is, that the contributors should 'bring' what they have already dedicated, and present it as a free-will offering to God.

"How interesting it is to open the fourth chapter of Genesis, and to read at the third verse regarding the worship in the neighbourhood of Eden! 'In process of time'—that is, 'at the end of days'—namely on the Sabbath day, 'Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.' There was an appointed *time*, and an appointed *place*, and the *man himself* was to appear there, and by certain acts declare his faith in God, his submission to the Divine Sovereignty, and, at the same time, his homage in the holding of property. 'And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.' Since that hour this way of 'collecting,' and this only, has received the approbation of Jehovah.

"Thus runs the record regarding another important institution of the old dispensation—'The first of all the first fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God,' Ex. xxiii. 10. In order to 'bring' them the offerer must come himself, and setting down his 'basket' in the place which the Lord had chosen he was to say, 'I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house,' &c., Deut. xxvi. 13. Observe, the things were already 'hallowed.' They had been dedicated to God privately, and now they are *carried* by the worshipper and presented to Him in the place of public assembly. Thus men confessed that *time* and *person* and *property* were all the Lord's.

"Look at another scene. The record will be found in Ex. xxxv. and xxxvi. A tabernacle was to be built in the wilderness. Who collected the materials? The command went out from Jehovah—'Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord; whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it.' And they came and 'brought,' and the women 'brought,' and the rulers likewise, and Bezaleel and Aholiab, and all the wise men worked, and they came to Moses saying, 'The people bring much more than enough,' &c., and Moses had to have it proclaimed that no more work should be made. 'So the people were restrained from bringing.' Ten times and more is that word 'bring' used in this passage to describe the mode in which the offerings of God's people were collected on that interesting occasion.

"Places for the worship of God are needed now. Is the wilderness mode of 'collecting' for their erection never to be resumed? Has any-