

Correspondence.

MRS. HESTER ANN ROGERS.

To the Editor of the Wesleyan.

Sir—As one of the primary objects of your paper is manifestly to "promote personal salvation," (implying personal holiness) as well as to exhibit the doctrines of the Gospel in their native purity and primitive simplicity: that their experimental and practical influence may be more deeply and generally felt, the following selections have been made from "The Life of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers," as eminently calculated, under the divine blessing, to promote these important and gracious truths. Introducing to your readers through the medium of one of the holiest men, perhaps, that ever adorned the Christian Church—emphatically called the "heavenly Fletcher"—as well as one of the most able and beautiful polemic writers of the age in which he lived, some of the deep things of God; namely, Christian perfection, a doctrine misunderstood by some, and strangely misrepresented by others: but to which the Founder of Methodism gave, and his followers are still known to give, a peculiar prominence in their preaching; and which the lives and death of both these burning luminaries of the church, Wesley and Fletcher, so sweetly harmonized in proclaiming; the latter, a star of the first magnitude, yet beaming forth with the mildest, softest radiance! Of these remarks, the following extracts will be found corroborative.

"1781, March, 30th.—Mr. Wesley preached at five this morning, from 'O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust.' He showed what were the things committed to Timothy, and then confined his discourse to the particular doctrines committed to the Methodists; and insisted that the doctrine of Christian perfection was the one peculiar point they were called to preach and practice; and that no other people under heaven did clearly insist on this, as a present and an instantaneous salvation; that they who did not preach or believe it, were no Methodists." She again writes, Leeds, August, 24th, 1781.—"That dear man of God, Mr. Fletcher, came with Miss Bosanquet, to dine at Mr. Smith's in Park Row, and also to meet the Select Society. After dinner, I took an opportunity to beg he would explain an expression he once used to Miss Loxdale, namely: 'that on all who are renewed in love, God bestows the gift of prophecy.' He called for the Bible: then read, and sweetly explained the second chapter of the Acts; observing, to prophecy in the sense he meant, was to magnify God with the new heart of love, and the new tongue of praise, as they did, who, on the Day of Pentecost, were filled with the Holy Ghost. And he insisted that believers are now called to make the same confession; seeing we may all prove the same baptismal fire: showing that the Day of Pentecost was only the opening of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost: the great promise of the Father. And that the latter day glory, which he believed was near at hand, should far exceed the first effusion of the Spirit. And therefore, seeing that they then bore witness to the grace of our Lord, so should we, and like them, spread the flame of love. Then after singing a hymn, he cried: 'O to be filled with the Holy Ghost! I want to be filled! O my friends, let us wrestle for a more abundant out-pouring of the Spirit!' He then said, 'My dear brethren and sisters, God is here! I feel him in this place.' But I would hide my face in the dust, because I have been ashamed to declare what he hath done for me! For many years I have grieved his Spirit; but I am deeply humbled, and he has again restored my soul! Last Wednesday evening, he spoke to me by these words, 'Reckon yourselves, therefore, to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' I obeyed the voice

of God; I now obey it, and tell you all, to the praise of his love, I am freed from sin, yes, I rejoice to declare it, and to bear witness to the glory of his grace,—that I am dead unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, who is my Lord and King! I received this blessing four or five times before, but I lost it by not observing the order of God, who has told us, 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation'. But the enemy offered his bait to keep me from a public declaration of what my Lord had wrought."

"When I first received his grace, Satan bade me wait awhile till I saw more of the fruits. I resolved to do so, but I soon began to doubt of the witness which before I had felt in my heart, and was in a little time sensible I had lost both. A second time after receiving this salvation, (with shame I confess it) I was kept from being a witness for my Lord by the suggestion, 'Thou art a public character, the eyes of all are upon thee, and if, as before, by any means thou lose the blessing, it will be a dishonour to the doctrine of heart holiness.' I held my peace, and again forfeited the gift of God. At another time, I was prevailed upon to hide it by reasoning,—How few, even of the children of God, will receive this testimony; many of them supposing that every transgression of the Adamic law is sin; and therefore, if I profess myself to be free from sin, all these will give my profession the lie, because, I am not free in their sense; I am not free from ignorance, mistake and various infirmities; I will, therefore, enjoy what God has wrought in me; but I will not say, I am perfect in love. Alas! I soon found again, 'he that hideth his Lord's talent, and improveth it not, from that unprofitable servant shall be taken away even that he hath.' Now, my brethren, you see my folly! I have confessed it in your presence, and now I resolve before you all to declare my master! I will confess him to all the world! and I declare to you in the presence of God, the Holy Trinity, I am now dead indeed unto sin. I do not say I am crucified with Christ, because some of our well-meaning brethren say, by this can only be meant a gradual dying; but I profess unto you I am dead unto sin, and alive unto God; and remember, all this is through Christ Jesus our Lord. He is my Prophet, Priest, and King! my indwelling holiness; my all in all. I wait for the fulfilment of that prayer, that they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; and they be one, even as we are one.' O for that baptismal flame! O for the fulness of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost! Pray, pray, pray for this! This shall make us all of one heart, and of one soul. Pray for gifts, for the gift of utterance, and confess your Royal Master. A man without gifts, is like the king in a disguise: he appears as a subject only. You are kings and priests unto God. Put on, therefore, your robes, and wear on your girdle, Holiness to the Lord."

Mrs. Rogers further records:

"A few days after this, I heard Mr. Fletcher preach from the same subject; inviting all who felt their need for redemption, to believe now for this great salvation; he observed, 'As when you reckon with your creditor or with your host, and as when you have paid all you reckon yourselves free: so now reckon with God. Jesus hath paid all, and he hath paid for thee! hath purchased thy pardon and holiness. Therefore, it is now God's command. Reckon thyself dead indeed unto sin, and thou art alive unto God from this time! O begin—begin to reckon now! Fear not; only believe, believe, believe! and continue to believe every moment; so shalt thou continue free; for it is retained by faith alone. And whosoever thou art that perseveringly believeth, it will be as a fire in thy bosom, and constrain thee to confess with thy mouth thy Lord and