

Growth in spiritual character like every other kind of growth is slow and gradual.

If therefore a person enters the Intermediate Life in a very imperfect state of grace, with a Christian character, hardly developed at all, he must not expect that his lot, as long as he remains in that state, will be cast with those of whom we read in Heb. xii, "The spirits of just men made perfect."

There is yet another consideration which must not be lost sight of in this part of our subject.

Think of earth's bloody battlefields strewn with the dead : Think of what we read of almost every day in our newspapers ; those appalling catastrophies, those railway accidents, those mining horrors, those shipwrecks, earthquakes, cyclones, tidal waves, and so on, by which thousands of our fellow-creatures are suddenly taken from the Life on earth to the Intermediate Life in Hades.

How it mitigates the inevitable sadness which we must feel when we read of those fields of battle, and of those frequent and various catastrophies, if we can bring ourselves to believe that death does *not* end all : that the school of earth may be followed by a higher school, the school of the Intermediate Life in Hades, where the imperfect work of grace begun on earth will be carried on and perfected : Where the Christian character, hardly formed here, will be developed and unfolded.

Have we any Scriptural warrant for this expectation ?

There are many passages in our N. T. which bear with more or less clearness on this point. There are however two in particular which I would commend to your thoughtful consideration.

In the 4th Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians it appears that among our Lord's objects in giving the Christian Ministry were these : "The perfecting of the saints ;" and the bringing of His people "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Will any one venture to assert that these objects have been as yet attained by any portion of the Church of God on earth ?

Have any of God's saints on earth been perfected ? Among the holiest of God's people have we as yet seen any who have reached