

THE CANADIAN UNITED PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. II.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 1, 1855.

No. 2.

Miscellaneous Articles.

ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

The immortality of the soul is one of the things which are most surely, and all but universally, believed amongst us, not only amongst Christians, but amongst all reflecting men, a few gross materialists excepted. Heathen philosophy attempted to demonstrate the doctrine. It has been amply brought to light by the gospel; and one cannot but wonder how any should be either able or willing to call it in question. It must be admitted, however, that we can form but indistinct and imperfect conceptions respecting the condition into which man enters after death. Scripture has doubtless taught us much on the subject that is transcendently interesting and important—all that is needful; still its declarations are, for the most part, general and figurative. Perhaps, from the nature of the case, they could not have been otherwise, so as to be at all comprehensible by us at present, unless our minds had been miraculously prepared for receiving them. Let us devoutly acknowledge our inexpressible obligations for the revelations which have been vouchsafed; but let us, at the same time, remember that “it doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

In the text just quoted, the Apostle seems to refer chiefly to the eternal state of the children of God; but his words may be applied with special emphasis to what has been called their intermediate state, that to which death immediately introduces their souls, and in which they continue till the period of the resurrection. It is agreed among divines that there is no other portion of our existence respecting which we are so much in the dark. Some theologians of great name have contended for the complete unconsciousness of all souls, during the time of their separation from the body, and, consequently, their absolute insensibility to either pleasure or pain. There can, of course, be no argument on the subject except what is furnished either by reason or by revelation. Looking at it in the light of reason, there are two aspects in which it may be viewed. The question.