

THE  
**Home and Foreign Record**

OF  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

JANUARY, 1864.

NEW YEAR HOMILY.

*"Who are all of us here alive this day."*  
Deut. v. 3.

Another year has revolved and these words of Moses may be adopted by reader and writer, and should suggest subjects of profitable reflection, as we enter upon the responsibilities and the cares of a new year.

Many are *not* alive this day. These words were spoken to the generation of Israel, who were about to enter Canaan. But a whole generation had been swept away since the covenant had been made in Horeb. With two remarkable exceptions, all who were of age when they came out of Egypt, perished in the wilderness; and the use of the words by Moses recalled to mind the large number, who had gone the way of all flesh. So the words suggest to us the thought of others, who are not alive. Many who even at the beginning of this year were not only alive but in their full strength are now laid low. In a thousand ways death has come and from every land, from every hamlet, from every hill and every valley, has been claiming his victims. And what a solemn change has passed over them! With the righteous all imperfections have been removed and they stand in the presence of God, holy as he is holy. With the wicked all their fair appearances are stripped from them, and they appear in their naked deformity, as the children of the wicked one. Of both the character and state are now *fixed*. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Their

happiness or misery also is complete. And in one or other of these conditions are all who have died. They are either in heaven—or in hell—and will be there forever.

And *how is it then that we are alive?* Bless the Lord, O my soul for this, as for all the other benefits thou art receiving at his hand. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." He is the "preserver of men." It is by his power that our bodies perform their various functions; and when we consider how complicated is our corporeal structure—of how many parts it consists, each so complex and subject to so many derangements; and how many processes are going on in it and must continue to go on, in order to the preservation of life, we may well say with the Psalmist. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the praise of his name to be heard, which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."

We are too apt to acknowledge God's hand in our preservation only in case of accident, or when we experience deliverance from some impending danger. But every moment of ease and of peace—yea even the fact that we are alive, is an evidence of God's care, and should lead us in gratitude to say, "What shall we render unto thee, O thou preserver of men." Reader, do you acknowledge the hand of God in the fact that you are alive this day. When we consider the numerous accidents to which we are exposed—by what simple means life may be destroyed—and how every day we are exposed to such accidents—we may wonder at our preservation, rather than at the removal of our fellow men by the events of God's