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Now and Forever

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Now and Forever

In this anniversary year of Handel's death (1759) the thrilling refrain in that composer's Hallelujah Chorus: "And He shall reign forever and ever," even today challenges Christians to rise to their feet as did the vast audience in Dublin which heard the first rendition of that powerful chorus.

There are other "forevers" in Christian thought. There is the "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever" in the Our Father. There is the emphatic "forever" in the Gloria Patri: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." There is the "forever" in the giving of thanks: "His mercy endureth forever." There is the "forever" of the Word of God: "But the Word of our God shall stand forever." There is the intimation of "forever" in the Savior's assurance to sorrowing Martha: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

But there are also "nows" in the economy of God's designs. There are the temporary and passing things which play so large and important a part in many phases of man's existence. They characterize not only the material things of life, but also such realities as the arts and sciences, manners and mores, law and government, even the public façade of divine worship. Though transient, changing, and decaying, God uses also these "nows" to sustain the world and the church. They, too, are divine gifts to be received by men with thanksgiving.

Readers of this journal will readily discern in this issue both the "nows" and the "forevers" and their relation to each other.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER