

- Pythagoras, the philosopher and poet of ancient Greece, looked out of upon the world of his day and gave expression to a sentiment with which you and I could not possibly quarrel after these more than 2000 years. Said he, the whole world is in a state of flux or change. Certainly whatever other expression we use to characterize our world today, we say that it is a world of change. I suppose, the philosopher of long ago, was thinking primarily in terms of those things which kaleidoscopically appeared before his eyes. The seasons that come and go. Springtime with its fresh rains, its flowering hillsides. The smell of rich, turned over soil. Summertime with its hot sun. With its growing fields, it's full dress parade of loveliness everywhere. And then the fall of the year, which for many of us, is the most wonderful of all. Where the kaleidoscopic colors are spread like a magic carpet over the entire earth. Yellows and gold, browns and reds, mingle together, in ravishing profusion. All the wintertime with its biting cold, its snow and its ice and sleep. All of these are part of the most obvious aspect of the changing world, which a philosopher of long ago observed and which is so commonplace to us today. One thinks likewise of geographical changes, which through these centuries, have characterized our life. Just a mile and a half from I was born in the little land of Korea, an Iron curtain has come down and it has just as effectively separated the peoples of the north from those of the south in this little land, as though the Iron Curtain itself were real. The geographies which we study have become increasingly larger. And the pages of our history books have extended themselves. Because as a result of the hates and the misunderstandings, the tragedies of life, these geographical changes have had to be reckoned with. The conference is going on in Europe today, in order to attend some delusion. The geographical changes which took place some years ago, in the land of Germany. These are the common places with which through these years, the people of mankind have learned to live. One thinks again about the changes of the pace at which we go. When King David and the long ago wished to learn of the tide in battle, he had to await the arrival of a runner across the rugged hills of Palestine. Sometimes he fell exhausted upon the palace steps and blurted out his story. But even so the King must have realized that this story, which had taken some time in the bringing, was now already old. The Indians I suppose, were better with their smoke signals, which carried their messages from one mountain peak to another. Or the Africans with the beat of the TomTom, whose sound was carried from one valley to the next, or even Paul Revere riding through the night to give warning of the impending approach of the enemy. Today, we look up into the heavens and we see the jet planes that travel with super sonic speed, bleed their vapor trails in a crisscross pattern over the whole earth. And when we think of missiles and rocket shifts, we can only begin to imagine what tomorrow will bring, in these changes of the pace at which we go. One thinks of the changes in the world of knowledge in so many areas, we can only be briefly illustrative. When I was a youngster growing up in Korea, I used to see the little medicine shops, and I can picture them in my mind yes, the little white bags, myriads of them, suspended from the ceiling of the room. Huge Chinese characters on the outside, designating the herbs that had with painstaking care, been gathered and dried and put within the bags for future use. These were the herbs with which for many centuries the peoples of this far away land had made the concoctions with which they strove against the ravages of disease. How futile and sometimes ineffective they were, is brought out by a saying, which to this day, has come down in this little land and goes like this, "We do not count our children until after they have had smallpox." So inevitable did it seem that the scourge should enter the life

of every home, they were not sure who the survivors would be until the disease had taken its toll. What the far cry our life is today from this, with our sulfurs and penicillin's and mycins. Those who are at work in the laboratories of the world are producing yet further medicines that will in time to come, push back the barriers, so that diseases will be conquered. Or again, one thinks about the ancient mariner, who feared to venture too far off to sea, lest he should topple off the rim of the earth. Today through the eyes of a 200 inch telescope, we look out into the vastness of a universe that we can, with our puny minds, scarcely begin to describe. And it is not inconceivable that discoveries in the life that is yet to be, will bring to us even larger realizations of the vastness of this universe in which you and I live. Change is all about us. Change is in the faces of people whom we know. Change is in our surroundings, in campus life, in community and home. When I was a boy, I used to love to come with my family, as occasionally we did, across the sea, to our home in South Carolina. What a stately mansion it seemed to me and my boyish way of looking at it, sitting there, stalwarts and majestic among the trees, some distance from the road, seemed to me the very epitome of what life at its best should be. Today, some 35, 40 years later, I return to these scenes of my childhood, and discover bitter disillusionment. The shingles are curled with age on the roof of the building. The paint is faded from the sides. There are ugly sockets where windows used to be, and shutters hang loose upon their hinges. A porch is half rotted away, and a paling fence lies like a wounded dragon, in the tall overgrown grass of the yard. It is only a shadow of its former glory. For time, you see, has taken its toll, and the changes are everywhere in evidence. In the midst of this world of change, where in the twinkling of an eye so we are told, life itself might be completely destroyed, and perhaps vast portions of this earth and universe as well, as a result of the discoveries that have come to man alone, powers which have wantonly let loose, might bring to pass the greatest tragedy that could possibly be known to mankind. In the midst of such possibilities as this, it is comforting to realize that there are some things that refuse to change. Some things that stand upon solid footing, which have foundation that will not be removed. People in a sense do not change, or their outward appearances, I suppose, but inwardly, we do not change. It is for this reason that the eternal book, out of who's pages a few moments ago, we read again, still appeals to the hearts of mankind, moves upon our minds, and directs our ways. People do not change, essentially. When my father went to Korea as a missionary, good many years ago now, he said that one day shortly after his arrival, he went out into the great city of Seoul. Even in those days, a city of nearly a million people. He found himself suddenly lost in the midst of strange Oriental sounds and scenes, in a little narrow alleyway filled with teeming people. It was so narrow he could almost reach out and touch the homes on either side, and the little shops. And he said, as he found himself, walking along, lost in this strange world, suddenly his ears detected a familiar sound. He went over to a nearby window on the street and bent his ear against it. And the sound came again. It was the cry of a little baby. He said he had warmed his heart to realize, that 12,000 miles from home, the little baby cried just like they do anywhere else in the world. And then further he walked along, and another familiar sound, pushed open a doorway that entered into a courtyard, and there were children at play, and they were laughing as they played. Again, said he, his heart was warm, by a familiar sound, familiar the world over. There's a young missionary concerned about what he might say to these people. By way of ministering to their needs, it came home to him that perhaps deep down on the inside, there is no great difference after all, though outwardly the differences may appear. That the gospel of Jesus Christ, which meant so much to him, might have the same telling effect and appeal to the lives of those people over there, whose emotions and responses to emotions were no different from ours. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever, says the writer of the book of Hebrews. As long life shall

last we cannot imagine these words being expressed in any other way. For somehow we feel that time will have no effect upon them. That the changes that take place in the world will have no meaning. That Jesus Christ will still be the same. The encouragement to the broken hearted. The companion who walks with us every step of the way. To says to us with just as much meaning today, as to his disciples he spoke the words, "Come unto me all the that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The one who says, as we walk along this way of life, I will never leave the, nor forsake the. Good many years ago, so the story goes, they told about the little French general, Napoleon, who at the height of his military career, called one day into his tent headquarters, upon the field of battle, his general associates. For a full half hour, so the story goes, he exalted in the victories that had come to France. To its armies. But after a while, his voice became subdued, a serious expression crept across his face. He looked down upon the map of the world that was spread out before him, put his finger down with emphasis upon the British aisles and declared, "If it were not for this red spot, I could conquer the world." Someone using this as a springboard, said that in imagination, he was carried to the regions of darkness. There said he, saw the devil and his cohorts assembled together. A map of the world spread out before them. And this theme of the underworld, for a full half hour, exalting in the victories that had come to him and to his associates, as from one nation to another, like a scourge they had gone, and eaten into the hearts and minds of men, and ruined their lives, from king to commoner alike. But after a while, a serious expression crept across his face, and his voice became subdued. And he put his finger down with emphasis upon a blood drenched spot, just outside the city of Jerusalem, where a Lord Christ had given his life and declared, "If it were not for this red spot, I could conquer the world." As long as Christ is alive in our hearts, and in our lives, in our world, come what may, we have encouragement to believe that there is hope for this world and its future. Somehow apart from it, we do not sense the hope that could possibly be ours for needy hour. Polycarp, the Christian of long ago, near the close of a long and useful life, devoted to his Christ, was given the alternative by the authorities of Rome, to recant his faith and spare his life. He pondered the alternatives a brief moment, and then he left behind some words that have been written timelessly into Christian history, when he said, "For 80 and six years, I have served him, and he has done me no harm. I will not now at last forsake him." He went to his death, and his associates put away his remains, and left behind this tribute, Staius Quadratus, being proconsul, but Jesus Christ being King forever. Staius Quadratus, whoever he might have been, has long since faded from the pages of history, but the living Christ whom we preach, whom we declare, with whom we live and move and have our being, lingers yet, the changeless, solitary figure, who is still the hope of our lives, and the hope of our world. In the year 1847, Henry F Lyte, conducted his final communion service, in Brixham, England, where the Mayflower was launched. After having served for some 24 years, as erector of this church, as the evening shadows were gathering, he walked out into the garden behind the church, hard by the sea, and he looked into the flaming sky produced by a beautiful sunset, those great red streamers sweeping across the heavens, and reflecting their glory and the waters beneath, somehow left an indelible impression upon his mind. And he left the scene to sit down and write some lines, that through these years have timelessly affected the lives of people by way of encouragement and hope. "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide. The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide." And the these words, significant for my message this morning, "Change and decay in all around I see. Oh thou who changes not, abide with me." So with encouragement and hope, on this beautiful day, which in its manifestations, reminds us of the presence of the eternal in our world. We say one to another with encouragement, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. Let us pray. Our mighty eternal God. We thank The for this day. For this privilege of

sharing together, in this beautiful place of worship. And the uplifting experience of coming to see in all flesh, our living Christ. Through thou who God, speak his peace. And his message of hope to our hearts. In this changing world, may we steadfastly cling to the unchanging Christ. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

- Amen.