

BENEDICITE, OMNIA OPERA

By F. W. GRAY

Striated stones, grooved by slow glacial grind
Wind-whipped icy peaks, abyssal ocean ooze
Once swirling molten through dark-flaming Chaos
Again may burn in fervent resurrection:
Winter wheat, tender-green, blading black earth
Upstanding grain, half-opened buds, falling leaves
Quiet brooks, curving through meadows, crocus-starred.
All Changing Life. Exemplars of God's Hand.

Ziggurat, sun-baked, black-pitched. Sodom's dire Plain
Where Chaldeans tracked "The Wanderers" through Heaven's
Host

Charred Walls of Ilium, Cheop's vasty Tomb
Sarsens of Stonehenge, Hadrian's sinuous Wall:
Seeming lifeless as the white bones they hide
Dusty, legendary Dead of Ages—
Commingled All—yet very Stuff of Life
Works and graves of searching Men, seeking God.

In these dry bones is Life, stirring Atoms
Like to the dry shaking bones Ezekiel saw
Atom jostling Atom, seeking its Mate
Eternally. What bodes this ordered Flux?
Naught is lifeless, was, or ever will be
God the Omnipotent gave all things Life
Gave Change, with that Life. Restless continuous Change
Gave His dark dread Mystery—renowned Death.

Out where our Sun in orbit holds the Earth
As greater Suns bind or are held in bounds
Circling august in due procession marshalled
Universe to Universe uncounted:
There, from star-dust spiralled, new Worlds roll on!
Dim, scanty our vision, we grasp but part
Finite cannot comprehend Infinity
Timeless, nothing was, nothing is, but GOD.

Introit

Creator Spirit! Thou Who made us Sons
In Thine Own Image. Sparks of Thy pure Essence
In this Body or departed hence
By Thee and in Thee live. For Thou art Life.
Have Mercy, have mercy on Thy Children, Lord!