

Luke 9:60 (James George Deck) 97016

Hymns and Sacred Poems, Let the Dead Bury Their Dead (9:60)

(See ECCLESIASTES 1: 2; 8:10.

I 've wandered o'er earth for many a year,
And hunted for pleasure and substance here;
I have tried the forum, and tent, and hall,
And wisdom and folly; I've proved them all;
But the mask and mirage alike have fled:
This earth 's a tomb, where "they bury their dead."
Where'er I journeyed I heard the sad toll
Knell loud and far the depart of the soul;
I have seen the coffin, and hearse, and pall,
And widows and children were weeping all;
Bitter and scalding the tears that they shed:
This earth 's a tomb, where "they bury their dead."
I've read the names on the rude, carved stones,
Where moulder to dust the now fleshless bones,-
The babe's, from its mother's fond bosom torn;
The husband's, that left wife and babes forlorn:
The aged and the young, the weak and the brave,
Alike were the prey of the hungry grave.
I have stood in the ancient Gothic, pile,
With its painted lights, and its long-drawn aisle;
I 've heard the organ peal forth its numbers,
Where the dust of the rich and noble slumbers;
There were crypts below, and marbles o'erhead:
'T was a tomb where the great "dead bury their dead."
Ye poets, fetch hither your sweetest lyres,
And waken your dead by their brilliant fires;
Ye sages-ye statesmen-your wit essay
To rob the dark grave of its loathsome prey;
Ye mitred priests, in your ghostly pride,
To exorcise death let your rites be tried!
Ye warriors bold, in your martial skill,

So quick to destroy, and so strong to kill,
Your legions muster, your blades unsheathe;
Your captains release from the hands of death:
Your cheeks grow pale, and your daring is fled;
Your trumpets must wail forth "the march of the dead."
Poor world, thou art powerless! Before thy great foe,
Thy wisdom, and glory, and might are brought low;
Thy beauty is changed to corruption; his thrust
Turns all thy proud boastings to ashes and dust:
Thou hast naught but to follow thy conqueror's tread,
And do his stern mandate,-dig graves for thy dead.

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