

have killed for my shearers, and give unto men, whom I know not whence they be?" Such was the contemptuous reply of Nabal to his generous and disinterested protector. No sheep was sent from the fold, no calf from the stall. Even bread was refused by this haughty and penurious "son of Belial." The churl is a stranger to gratitude and courteousness. He is deaf to the voice of want or distress. He chooses not to remember former services and kindness. Covetous and hard-hearted, he steels his soul against every tender emotion, and grasps with tenacity the relief which charity solicits or justice demands. "Take heed and beware of covetousness."

Nabal was a fool. His name implies it. His treatment of David was an act of folly as well as of unkindness. David's resentment was kindled; he rashly resolved on destroying this insolent churl, and but for the prudence, generosity, and address of Nabal's wife, he would have been slain. David's resolution was sinful, as he afterwards confessed it to be. Revenge, "though it may be sweet," is criminal. It is the "glory of a man to pass by transgression." Though reviled, he ought not to have reviled again; though he suffered, he ought not to have threatened, but should have borne with dignity and meekness the gratuitous insult, leaving it to God to vindicate the cause of the just, and to "recompense vengeance" where it is due. The folly of Nabal was not restricted to this act of thoughtlessness and ingratitude. His whole life proved him to be a fool in the scriptural sense of that term: folly and sin in scripture have the same meaning. A wicked man is pre-eminently a fool. He prefers selfish gratification to the will of God, disobedience to holiness, time to eternity, earth to heaven. Nor is this folly restricted to gross immorality, or deeds from which the compassion-

ate, the polite, or the virtuous would shrink with abhorrence. The learned, the generous, and the moral, who substitute wisdom for religion, or liberality for the surrender of themselves as living sacrifices to God, or morality for faith and love, are guilty of pitiable folly, equally with the immoral and the vile. Nabal's folly discovered itself in all his ways. He was "evil in his doings," a wicked man, a son of Belial; his temper and conduct were influenced and governed by the spirit of the wicked one, that spirit who rules in the "children of disobedience." An additional proof of his folly is given.

Nabal was a drunkard. At the feast "his heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken." The narrative suggests that he was by custom and habit an intemperate man. Intoxication is one of the vices of the ungodly, and is a standing mark of a son of Belial, a child of the devil. It is an offence to God, and a disgrace to man; it drowns reflection, impairs reason, and injures health; it renders a man unfit for the duties of life makes him capable of any sin, and often places him in circumstances of extreme peril. Besotted with wine, Nabal little apprehended what dangers threatened him, and how near he was to death and hell. He was dwelling on the brink of perdition, on the precipice of woe. The Lord kept his servant David from imbruing his hands in the blood of his enemy; but the death of Nabal was at hand. This was to him his last feast, his last shearing, his last opportunity for abusing the good things of this life. Little did he expect when rioting in his cups what news would be brought him in the morning. His maxim was, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die;" and it proved to be a truth. His soul was to be "required of him" in a few short days, and drunkard as he was, he must be hurried into eternity. Fearful state