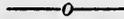




ERRING THROUGH WINE.



But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.—ISAIAH 28: 7.

This passage of the Divine Word suggests for our consideration topics that are seldom dealt with in the pulpit. Indeed, in the thinkings of not a few they are ruled out of the category of pulpit themes altogether. The grounds of this view I have never been able clearly to learn, but the expression generally made use of is, "Let ministers preach the gospel: they have no right to meddle with other things in the pulpit."

Such talk—reasoning I cannot call it—is wide of the mark. The misconception seems to arise on the one hand from ignorance of what a minister's position and duty really are, and on the other hand from an entire misapprehension of the nature of the gospel which he is commissioned to preach. In the estimation of such persons, "preaching the gospel" is merely talking on stated occasions, in a smooth way, about the love of God and the joys of heaven, and carefully avoiding whatever might trouble a hearer's conscience, or offend his pride.