to their respective opinions of themselves;  
as also **righteous** and **sinners**, ver. 13:—  
not as though the Pharisees were *objectively* either “*whole*” or “*righteous*,”  
however much objective truth “*sick*”  
and “*sinners*” may have had as applied  
to the publicans and sinners.

**13.**] The whole of this discourse, with  
the exception of the citation, is almost  
verbatim in Mark, and (with the  
addition of “*to repentance*”) Luke also.

**14.**] According to the detailed narrative of St. Mark (ii. 18) it was the disciples  
of John *and of the Pharisees* who  
ed this question. St. Luke continues  
the discourse as that of the former Pharisees and Scribes. This is one of those  
instances where the three accounts imply  
and confirm one another, and the hints  
incidentally dropped by one Evangelist  
form the prominent assertions of the other.

*The fasting often* of the disciples of  
John must not be understood as done in  
mourning for their master’s imprisonment,  
but as belonging to the asceticism which  
John, as a preacher of repentance, inculcated. On the fasts of the Pharisees, see Lightfoot in loc.

**15. mourn**] =  
“*fast,*” Mark and Luke. The difference  
of these two words is curiously enough one  
of Greswell’s arguments for the non-identity of the narratives. Even if there  
were any force in such an argument, we  
might fairly set against it that the Greek  
word rendered **taken** is common to all  
three Evangelists, and occurs no where  
else in the N. T.

**the bridegroom**]  
This appellation of Himself had from our  
Lord peculiar appropriateness as addressed  
to the disciples of John. Their master  
had himself used the figure, and the very  
word in John iii. 29. Our Lord, in calling  
Himself the Bridegroom, announces the  
fulfilment in Him of a whole cycle of  
O.T. prophecies and figures: very probably with *immediate* reference to Hosea  
ii., that prophet having been cited just  
before : but also to many other passages,  
in which the Bride is the Church of God,  
the Bridegroom the God of Israel. See  
especially Isa. liv. 5–10 Heb. and E.V.  
As Stier (i. 320, edn. 2) observes, the  
article **the** here must not be considered as  
merely introduced on account of the parable, as usual elsewhere, but the parable  
itself to have sprung out of the emphatic  
name, “**the bridegroom.**” The **sons of  
the bridechamber** are more than the mere  
guests at the wedding: they are the  
bridegroom’s friends who go and fetch the  
bride.

**the days will come**] How  
sublime and peaceful is this early announcement by our Lord of the bitter  
passage before Him! Compare the words  
of our Christian poet: ‘measuring with  
calm presage the infinite descent.’ It has  
been asked, “What man ever looked so  
calmly, so lovingly, from such an height  
down to such a depth!”

**shall be**] more properly, **shall have been taken from  
them**: when His departure shall have  
taken place.

**and then shall** (*better*, **will**) **they fast**] These words are not a declaration of a duty, or of an ordinance, as  
binding on the Church in the days of her  
Lord’s absence: the whole spirit of what  
follows is against such a supposition: but  
they declare, in accordance with the parallel word “*mourn,*” that in those days  
they shall have *real occasion* for fasting;  
sorrow enough; see John xvi. 20:–a fast  
of God’s own appointing in the solemn  
purpose of His will respecting them, not  
one of their own arbitrary laying on.  
This view is strikingly brought out in  
Luke, where the question is, “Can ye  
*make* the sons, &c. *fast*,” i.e. by your  
rites and ordinances? “but, &c.” and  
*then shall they fast*: there is no constraint  
in this latter case: they shall (will) fast.  
And this furnishes us with an analogous  
rule for the fasting of the Christian life:  
that it should be the genuine offspring of  
inward and spiritual sorrow, of the sense