

separation from the nation's and their principles. These latter set up kings over themselves (1 Sam. viii. 5), whilst Jehovah was the sole ruler of the people when faithful. The *fig tree* said: "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?" (ver. 11), for Israel could only bear fruit when in separation from the nations. The *vine* said: "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" New wine is the joy found in the mutual communion of men with God, and this enjoyment—the highest that could be desired—was lost to Israel when they adopted the spirit and ways of the nations.

What a lesson for us Christians! The world is to the church, what the nations were to Israel. If we yield to its solicitations, we abandon our oil, our fruit, our new wine—that is to say, our spiritual power, the works which God has prepared for us (Ephes. ii. 10), and the joy of communion. Oh! are we able to respond to all the offers of the world: Should I leave that which is my happiness and my strength, for fruitless turmoil, or to satisfy the lusts and ambitions of the heart of men? Jotham, like his father Gideon (viii. 23), appreciates these treasures of the Israel of God, and set himself apart on Gerizim, retaining his blessed position. In the presence of all this apostate people, he is the true and last bud of faith, the sole witness for God. What honour for the young and feeble son of Jerubbaal! Spurned by all, his lot was the