

BETWEEN TWO.

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'And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and, cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff.'—NUMBERS xiii. 23.

The cluster of Eshcol is famous among fruits of the earth. Divines have delighted to find in it a symbol of those superlative delights which afford to believers on earth a foretaste of their future bliss. Our readers do not need to traverse that well-known path, nor did we take up our pen to write of that "earnest of the Spirit" which is the pledge of the rest of heaven. The carrying of the notable cluster between two, is the one point which has caught our eye and set our mind in motion. Why was it carried on a staff in that fashion? Surely not principally because of its weight, for the hugest bunch of grapes imaginable would be an easy burden for a man. Was it not to preserve the beauty, freshness, and bloom of the luxuriant cluster, that the spies thus bore it to the camp? One bearer alone could not have kept the luscious fruit uncrushed and unbruised; but two, with a little care, carried it in safety. Among all the proofs of Canaan's plenty, none was more overwhelming than the cluster which two must bear between them. Reader, among the joys of believers, none are more sweet than those which require Christian fellowship to develop them.

The joy which we gratefully tell to another is doubled to ourselves, and preserved far longer in the soul. The prayer in which two agree is prevalent beyond and above all solitary devotion for it hath a special promise of a sure result. The praise which streams from brotherly hearts and voices, each helping to swell the strain, has the richness of the first ripe fruit about it. To forsake the assembling of ourselves together, would involve the loss of one of

the dearest Christian privileges, for the worship of the Church below is the vestibule of the adoration of heaven. If ever heaven comes down to earth, it is in the communion of saints. Our Lord's table is oftentimes glory anticipated. The prayer meeting often seems to be held close to Jerusalem's city wall; it stands in a sort of border land between the celestial and the terrestrial; it is a house and yet a gate, fruition and expectation in one, the house of God and the very gate of heaven. Church-fellowship is meant by our Lord Jesus to be the table upon which the daintiest meats of the banquet of grace are served up: those who neglect it crush their grapes for want of a friend to help them to carry the cluster.

Are there none among us whose solitude is a solemn injury to their joys? Might not many a downcast one take good heart if he would but associate with a Christian companion? . . . Jesus sent out His disciples by twos, for He knew that each would cheer his fellow. Service is usually best in companionship; he who works altogether alone will be in his temper either too high or too low, censorious or desponding. Two are better far than one; they not only accomplish twice the work, as we might have expected, but they frequently multiply their power seven times by their co-operation. . . To find a brother is to find a pearl of great price; to retain a friend is to treasure up the purest gold. BETWEEN TWO UPON A STAFF we find happiness.

Reader, be not a carping critic, separating from everybody. There is surely something common to thee and another which thou and he may work for or rejoice in. Be the friend of men, and not the reviler of thy kind. Be a bond in the church, not a separating knife. Little children love one another.—*Spurgeon.*