

REVIVAL ADDRESSES

by

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"What the Bible Teaches,"
"How to Work for CHRIST,"
"How to Pray," etc. etc.

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Chapter 17

THREE FIRES

" . . . **he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire**" Matthew 3:11.

One night, years ago, I was sitting at my desk in my study late at night, and the work of the day was done. There was a great deal of confusion about my study table, for I had just moved that day, and had not had time to rearrange my papers. The work of the day being done, I fell into a reverie, and as I came out of that reverie I found myself gently waving back and forth in my right hand a little four-page leaflet. I do not know how it got into my hand. I suppose I took it off the table; but I don't even know how it got on to the table, for I had never seen it before.

I looked at that leaflet, and I noticed these words across the top of the leaflet in large print, "*Wanted, a Baptism with Fire.*"

It immediately fastened my attention. I said, "That is precisely what I do want; if there is anybody on this earth that needs fire, it is I," for I was born, and had grown up cold as an iceberg. So I had the leaflet. There was not much in the leaflet that impressed me, except one text, "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;**" and that not only impressed me, it kept ringing in my mind and heart, by day and by night. I could not get away from it: "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.**"

The following Saturday evening, when I went to a little gathering for prayer here at my church, I said to the janitor of the church, when the prayer meeting was over. "The promise says, '**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.**'"

A sweet smile passed over the janitor's face, and there was something about his look which made me think, "Well, the janitor seems to know all about it. I wonder if he has got something his

pastor has not got."

During the days of the next week, when I sat down in my study, when I walked the streets, that kept ringing in my ears: "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.**"

Thursday night came, and at the close of my day's work I knelt down before GOD, and asked Him for a text or for a subject for Sunday evening's sermon. A brother from London was going to preach for me in the morning. The only text I could see in the whole Bible was, "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,**" and I said, "Father, I am not to preach on Sunday morning; that is a Sunday morning text, and I don't preach in the morning. Mr. Inglis is going to preach then."

I generally preach in the morning to Christians, and to the unsaved in the evening. "I want an evening text."

But I could not see anything, but just that one text, "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.**"

"Well," I said, "Father, if that is the text you want me to preach on, evening or morning, I will preach on it; but I want to know."

Just then there came looming up out of the Bible two other texts, and both of these texts had "**fire**" in them; and while I was on my knees GOD just opened the three texts, and I had my sermon.

The next Sunday night I went to my church and preached that sermon. When I had finished it I said, "Now all the friends who want to be baptized with the HOLY GHOST and fire to-night, and all who want to be saved, come downstairs."

The rooms downstairs were jammed, and when all who replied to the invitation had found room, I asked all who wanted to be baptized with the HOLY GHOST and fire to go into the kindergarten room, and those who wished to be saved to go into another room, the inquiry room, and the rest to stay where they were.

They began to go into both rooms; I went into the kindergarten room, where the people were sitting in the little bits of kindergarten chairs, and so closely packed that I literally had to step over their heads to get to the platform.

Oh, what a time we had in that room that night! When I came out I asked my assistant, who was in charge of the inquiry room, what sort of a time he had had, and he said, "The Spirit of GOD was there, and many people came out into the light."

I asked Professor Towner, the choir-master, who was left in charge of the third meeting, composed of those who had not entered either of the two rooms, and he said, "We had no meeting at all; I could not say a word; the people got right down on their knees before GOD and talked to Him."

I hope GOD will bless the Word the same way to-night. I believe He will.

I. THE BAPTISM WITH FIRE

You will find the first of the three fires in Matthew 3:11: "**I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:**"

That is the first of the three fires, the baptism with fire. What does it mean? Now we know what it means to be baptized with water - we have seen that - but what does it mean to be baptized with fire? You will get your answer by asking two things: first, what is fire said to do in the Bible? and, second, what happened to the Apostles at Pentecost when they were baptized with the HOLY GHOST and fire?

1. The first thing that the Bible says that fire does is, fire reveals.

In 1 Corinthians 3:13, we read: "**Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire!**" And the first thing that a baptism with fire does is to reveal what a man really is, to show us to ourselves as GOD sees us. I remember the night before I preached that sermon, late on Saturday night after the sermon was all arranged, I got down and said, "Heavenly Father, I think I have a sermon for to-morrow night, but I don't believe I have got that of which the sermon speaks. I am going to preach on the baptism with the HOLY GHOST and fire, and how can I preach on it if I have not had it? Now, in order that I may preach an honest sermon, baptize me with fire right now." GOD heard the prayer, and the first thing that came to pass was that I had such a revelation of myself as I never had before in all my life. I had never dreamed that there was so much pride, so much vanity, so much personal ambition, so much downright meanness in my heart and life as I saw that night. And men and women., if you get a baptism with fire, I believe one of the first things that comes to you will be a revelation of yourself as GOD sees you. Is not that just what we need, a revelation of ourselves to-day that will spare us the awful humiliation of the revelation of self in that day when we stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST?

2. The second thing that fire does is, fire refines, or purifies. In Malachi 3:1-3, we are told of the purifying power of fire.

There is nothing that purifies like fire. Water will not cleanse as fire does. Suppose I have a piece of gold, and there is some filth on the outside of it; how can I get it off? I can wash it off with water. But suppose the filth is inside it, how will you get it out? There is only one way: throw it into the fire. And, men and women, if the filth is on the outside it can be washed away with the water of the Word; but the trouble is that the filth is on the inside, and what we need is the fire of the HOLY GHOST penetrating, into the innermost depths of our being, burning, burning, burning, cleansing.

What a refining came to the apostles on the day of Pentecost! How full of self-seeking they had been up to the very last Supper! At the Last Supper, they had a dispute as to who should be the first in the Kingdom of Heaven, but after Pentecost they no longer thought of self, but of CHRIST. How weak and cowardly they had been right up to the crucifixion! They all forsook

Him and fled, and Peter denied Him, at the accusation of a servant maid, with oaths and curses. But after the day of Pentecost, that time Peter that cursed and swore and denied CHRIST when the servant maid accused him of being a follower of JESUS, faced the very council that condemned Him, and said, **"If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole."** Ah, friends, cleansing is a very slow process by ordinary methods, but a baptism with fire does marvels in a moment.

3. In the third place, the Bible teaches us that fire consumes. In Ezekiel 24:11-13, we are told of the consuming power of fire, the fire of judgment that will consume the filth and dross of Jerusalem. And the baptism of fire consumes in fact it cleanses by consuming; it burns up all dross, all vanity, all self-righteousness, all personal ambition, all ungovernable temper.

We had once at the Bible Institute in Chicago, a young woman who was much that a Christian should not be. When we heard she was coming, all of us in authority thought she never ought to have come to the Bible Institute. I thought so when I heard she was coming, for I had known her in the school from which she came, and I knew she was one of the most unmanageable scholars they ever had in the school. She was stubborn, willful, proud, quick-tempered, boisterous loud, and pretty much everything a girl ought not to be. When I heard she was coming to the Bible Institute. I said, "So-and-so coming to the Bible Institute! What in the world does she want at the Bible Institute?" But her uncle was one of the best friends the Institute ever had, and so, out of consideration for her uncle, we admitted her.

Now, we require of every student in that Bible Institute that some definite work to save the lost should go hand in hand with Bible study; for Bible study, unless it is accompanied with actual work for the salvation of souls, will dry up a man's soul quicker than almost anything else. We required the young woman to go into the tenements, the homes of the poor and the outcast.

One afternoon this girl had been visiting in Milton Avenue and Townsend Street, two of the poorest streets of Chicago. After a time she became very tired with climbing up and down the stairs, and going in and out of the filthy homes; and instead of returning to the Institute, she walked on in a very rebellious frame of mind, and went down to the Lake Shore Drive, the finest avenue in Chicago, along the shore of the lake. As she passed by those magnificent mansions there, she looked up at them with an eye that danced with pleasure, and said, "This is what I like. I have had enough of Milton Avenue; I have had enough of climbing stairs and going into tenements. This is what I like, and this is what I am going to have."

She came back to the Institute, and went straight to her room, still in a very bitter and rebellious frame of mind. The tea-bell rang before the battle was over, and she went to the table and took her seat and sat down, and there at the tea-table the fire of GOD fell right where that girl was sitting. She sprang from her seat and rushed over to a friend at the other table, and threw her arms around her, and exclaimed, "I am a volunteer for Africa!", and the fire of GOD in a moment burned, and burned, and burned, until that young woman was so changed, her actions were so changed, her views of life, her tastes, her ambitions, her very face was so changed in a moment, that when her old friends saw her and heard her they could hardly believe their own eyes and

ears.

Later on she went back to that same school down in Massachusetts, where had been such a hindrance, and with burning words poured out her heart to the girls there, and with mighty power led them to the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world.

Is not that what we need to-night, a fire that will burn up this pride of ours, this selfishness of ours, this vanity of ours, this worldliness of ours, burn up all these things that hinder the world from coming to CHRIST, because we make men think that Christianity is unreal? You women with unconverted husbands, is not that what you need, a baptism with fire, transforming your life and clothing it with beauty, so that your husband will say, "I must have what my wife has got?"

4. In the next place, fire illuminates.

Oftentimes when in Chicago - I look off towards the north-west of the city, suddenly I see the heavens lit up and then grow dark again, then they are illuminated once more and then darkened. The great foundry doors had been opened and shut, and opened and shut, and this light in the heavens was the glow from the furnaces.

Fire illuminates, but no fire illuminates like "**the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire.**"

When a man is baptized with the HOLY GHOST and fire, truth that was dark to him before becomes instantly as bright as day; passages in the Bible that he could not understand before become as simple as A B C, and every page of GOD's Holy Word glows with heavenly light. A baptism with fire will do more to take the infidelity and skepticism and false doctrine out of a man than any university education. How many a young fellow comes out of a theological education more than half an infidel, but the great day comes when that half-infidel preacher is baptized with the HOLY GHOST and fire, and his doubts and his questionings and his criticisms go to the Winds. How many an untaught or half-taught man has so wonderful an acquaintance with the truth of GOD that men who are scholars sit at his feet with profound atonement, because he has been illuminated with the baptism with the HOLY GHOST and fire!

Take the case of this girl again. I was away when the event I described happened, and the first thing I heard when I returned was what had taken place with her. I was going from the men's side of the institute, and was passing between the church and the women's end when this young girl turned into the gate and met me.

She looked up into my face, and said, "Oh, Professor Torrey, have you heard?"

"Yes, Jack, I have heard." I said, and, by the way, that is an indication of her character that she should be called Jack; "I have heard what has happened," and then she just began to pour out her soul.

She fairly danced on the side-walk as she told me, and I knew for once what it meant to dance before the Lord! Then she closed about this way: "One of the best things about it is that the Bible is a new book. The Bible used to be just the stupidest book I ever read, and I didn't believe it was the Word of GOD at all. I did believe in the divinity of JESUS CHRIST, because your lectures

compelled me. But The Bible was a stupid book. But oh, now GOD is showing me such wonderful things in the Bible."

Now be honest. Are there not some of you to-night that profess to be Christians, to whom the Bible is a stupid book? If you would tell the honest truth, would you not rather read a novel than the Bible? You do read the Bible, because you think you ought to: but you get no enjoyment out of it. What you need is a baptism with the HOLY GHOST and fire, and that would make the Bible a new book; glory would shine from every page.

5. The next thing that fire does is, fire makes warm, it makes to glow. You stand before a furnace door, behind which is a glowing fire. You have in your hand a bar of iron; it is cold, and black, and forbidding, and there is no beauty in it. But you take that cold, dark, forbidding bar of iron, and you open the furnace door and thrust it into the glowing fire. Soon it is warm, then it becomes red hot and glows with marvelous beauty, and you have the cold bar of iron glowing with fire.

You and I are cold - oh, how cold we are! and the Lord JESUS takes us and He plunges us into the fire of the HOLY SPIRIT.

We begin to grow warm, and soon we glow:

- glow with love to GOD,
- glow with love to CHRIST,
- glow with love to the truth,
- glow with love for perishing souls.

Men and women, the great need of the day is men and women on fire. Brethren, that is what we need in the pulpit, ministers on fire. What cold men most of us preachers are! Orthodox enough, it may be, and we present the most solemn truth with great force of reason and great beauty of rhetoric and most convincing eloquence; and our audiences sit there and admire our strong preaching, but they do not repent of their sins. Why not? Because we are not on fire. We convince the intellect, but we do not melt the heart.

But put a minister who is on fire in the pulpit. Wesley was such a man, Whitefield was such a man; Charles G. Finney was such a man - put a man on fire in the pulpit, and the audience will melt.

But we need that kind of people in the choir as well. What beautiful choirs we have nowadays. Why, they sing almost like angels, and people sit there admiring them but nobody is converted by their singing. But when we get a man on fire to sing, or a woman on fire to sing, or a choir on fire to sing, something is brought to pass.

That is what we need in our Sunday School classes. We need a young man or a young woman to teach a Sunday School class, and they know the lesson capitally and study all the latest "helps," and make the lesson tremendously interesting, but the boys and girls and men and women in their classes are not converted because the teachers are not on fire.

Oh, men and women of London, the need in London more than anything else to-night is a

baptism with fire on the minister, a baptism with fire on the elders, a baptism with fire on the deacons a baptism with fire, on the choir, a baptism with fire on the Sunday school teachers, a baptism with fire on the personal workers and a baptism with fire upon the men and women in the congregation. We sang a hymn just now, praying that the fire of GOD might fall in Mildmay Conference Hall to-night. If it does, men and women, if it does, London will be shaken.

6. The next thing that fire does is, fire imparts energy. The men of science tell us that every form of energy can be transmuted into fire, and that given fire you can generate any form of force or energy. When a baptism with fire comes then comes power. That is the principal manifestation at Pentecost.

The fire of GOD fell, and with the energy of that fire men went out from that upper room, and 3,000 people were converted.

A man takes me to his factory. He says, "This machinery is the best in the world." He takes me down into the engine-room, and says, "Look at that great engine, it is so many horse-power, and there is power in that engine to move every wheel in this great factory." Then I go back to the factory and I look around. There is nothing doing at all. "It is very strange," I say; "did you not tell me that this was the best machinery in the world for this purpose, and that that engine downstairs could move every wheel in the factory? Well, I notice the connections are all made, and everything is in gear, and the lever is carried the right way, but there is not a wheel moving in all the factory. What is the matter?"

"Don't you know?" he says.

"Come downstairs, and I will show you," and he takes me down again to the engine-room to the engine, and he throws open the door and says, "Look in there."

And lo! there is no fire in the fire-box.

I go off to the railway. There is a great engine standing on the rails, and I am told it is the finest engine that was ever turned out from the locomotive works. It can drag a heavily freighted train up a hundred-foot grade. The engine has been coupled on to about half-a-dozen unloaded cars. I look at the engine and say, "What, did you tell me? Can it draw a heavily loaded train up a hundred-foot grade? Then will you please explain something to me? That engine has only six empty cars behind it, the coupling is made, the throttle is open, and yet it is not moving, and cannot pull a car, and yet you say it can pull a hundred. What is the matter?" I am taken on to the engine, and the door of the furnace is thrown open, and when I look in I see there is no fire in the fire-box. That is what is the matter.

Friends, I go into churches to-day, and oh, what beautiful organization I see, what magnificent architecture, what eloquent preaching I hear, what marvelous singing! And yet not a wheel in the whole institution moving for GOD. What is the matter? There is no fire in the fire-box. What we need today is the fire of GOD in the fire-box, and thank GOD the promise is "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire.**"

7. One thing more about this fire: fire spreads; nothing spreads like fire. I remember hearing

some years ago, before I went to live in Chicago, about an old Irish woman, who had a little shanty in the city, with a little shed back of it, in which she kept a cow. And one night she was milking her cow, and the cow suddenly kicked and knocked over her lantern. The lantern fell on a wisp of straw, which caught fire, and set the shed afire. The shed set the shanty afire, and the shanty next to it caught fire, and the shanty next to that, and the one next to that, and soon the fire leaped over the south branch of the Chicago river to the east side, and on and on it swept, and in forty-eight hours it had cleared an area of one mile wide and three miles long, and there were but two buildings left in all that section of Chicago. Fire spreads. If a fire is kindled here to-night it will sweep all over London all over Great Britain, and Ireland.

That night I spoke of at the beginning of my sermon, we had a stranger from London in Chicago, who came to hear me preach. He came downstairs in response to my invitation, and he told us, "I am just in Chicago to-day from London, and I want this baptism of fire;" and he got it. When he left the church he went to his room, and sat down and wrote a letter to the Bible class of which he was a member in London. The teacher read it to the class, and the fire of GOD came into that class, and in about two weeks after he had sent the letter he got word from London that the fire which fell in Chicago had been kindled in that church in London. Nothing spreads like fire. Do we not need the baptism with this fire to-night?

II. THE FIRE OF JUDGMENT THAT WILL TRY THE BELIEVER'S WORKS

The second fire you will find in 1 Corinthians 3:13, 15: **"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."**

This second fire is the fire of judgment, testing our works at the judgment seat of CHRIST.

Now you notice the judgment here is not the judgment regarding our salvation. These are saved people whose works are burnt up. All the work we do for CHRIST is to be put to the test, is to be put to the severest kind of test, the fire test; and, friends, there is a great deal the Church of CHRIST is doing professedly for CHRIST, and a great deal individual Christians are doing, that will never stand the fire test. Do you think that these church fairs and bazaars and all that sort of tomfoolery by which the Church of CHRIST is brought down to the level of the dime museum, into which so many professed Christians are putting their best energies, do you think that these will stand the fire test? Never! they will all go up in smoke.

You may be saved, but you will lose your reward. You will be saved so as by fire.

A great deal of work that is good, but that is done not to GOD's glory but for personal ambition - the good sermon, perfectly orthodox, severely logical, beautifully rhetorical, the sermon that even good people applaud, but that is preached not that GOD may be glorified in the salvation of sinners, but that the preacher may be applauded. Do you think that will stand the fire test? Never! it will go up in smoke. The beautiful solos and the philanthropic work done, the personal soul saving work done, not for GOD's glory but for the exaltation of self- will these stand the fire test? Never! they will all go up in smoke.

On the night of which I have been speaking in my church, the two leading singers went down into that second meeting, and the leading soprano said - a beautiful singer, one of the most beautiful singers I have ever heard, "I never thought of it before. I don't believe I have sung a solo in my life for GOD. I sang it for self."

Thank GOD the fire of GOD came upon my leading soprano and my leading contralto, and I lost them both, for they became missionaries. I would like to lose the whole choir, if I could lose them in the same way!

Furthermore, let me say, good work, work done for a good purpose, but done in our own strength and not done in the power of the HOLY GHOST, will not stand the fire test. The sermon preached to glorify GOD, but preached with the enticing words of man's wisdom and not in demonstration of the spirit and power of GOD, will it stand the fire test? Never! So, men and women, our work is to be tried regarding its character, regarding its motive, regarding its power in which it is done. Will your work stand the fire?

III. THE FIRE OF ETERNAL DOOM

We come now to the third fire. We read of it in I Thessalonians 1:7-9: "**The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.**"

The third fire is the fire of eternal doom.

Every one of us must meet GOD in fire somewhere. Some of us, I hope, to-night will meet Him in the fire of baptism, with the HOLY GHOST and fire; some of us, I know, will meet Him in that great judgment day, when the fire will try our work, of what sort it is; and oh, friends, some of us, I fear - GOD grant it may be very few- may meet Him in the fire of eternal doom. Some people, if they find anything in the Bible that they do not like, say "It is figurative," and they think that has swept it all away. Remember, who uses the figures; they are GOD's figures; and GOD's figures stand for facts, and GOD is not a liar, so GOD's figures never overstate the facts they represent. And how terrible must be the mental and spiritual agony described by that figure, if figure it be! Were you ever severely burnt? Did you ever see any one severely burnt? I have been. And how awful must be the spiritual or physical agony, whichever it is; that is represented by such a terrible figure as this.

The superficial thinker says, "Oh, I cannot believe that; I cannot believe that a merciful GOD is going to let men go on suffering day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, with no hope." Open your eyes. Look at what is going on right around you in London. Is not GOD permitting men and women who sin, especially in certain specific forms of sin, to suffer most awful agonies day after day, month after month, year after year, without one hope of relief unless they repent; and when the time of possible repentance is passed - and it must pass some time - when the time of possible repentance is passed, and this goes on and on and on, ever worse and worse, what have you got but hell?

You don't get rid of hell by getting rid of the Bible, or by getting rid of GOD; hell is here; hell is a fact in London to-night. The only change the Bible and GOD make is that they open a door of hope, and when you banish GOD and the Bible the only change you make is that you shut the only door of hope. The infidels are guilty of the amazing folly of trying to close hell by shutting the only door of hope. Hell is here. It is a present-day fact, and unless there is repentance and acceptance of CHRIST it will be an eternal and endless fact. You say, "For whom?" Listen: **"Rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel."**

First, **"to them that know not God."** That is plain English for agnostics. Do you know what "agnostic" means? A great many people are proud of saying, "I am an agnostic." Well, agnostic means "know not" or "know nothing"; it is used of those who **"know not God."** So our text says GOD will render vengeance to agnostics. Some one says, "That is not just." I cannot help that: it is a fact. But it is just. You ought to know GOD; you have no excuse for not knowing GOD. The most solemn duty that lies upon every man is to find out about GOD, and there is a way to know GOD. The trouble is you don't want to know GOD. Any agnostic that wants to know GOD will soon get acquainted with Him. I was once an agnostic, but I was an honest one, and I did not take long to find GOD.

Only the other night a man said to me, "I am an agnostic."

I pointed him to a way out of agnosticism, a reasonable way, and asked, "Is not that reasonable?" and he said, "Yes." "Then I said, "Will you try it?" and he said, "No, I won't."

His agnosticism is not his misfortune; it is his sin. The first and most solemn obligation resting on the creature is to know and worship and serve the Creator. You ought to know GOD, and if you refuse to know Him, the Lord JESUS will be revealed at last rendering vengeance to you and other agnostics.

But not only, to agnostics, but **"to them that obey not the Gospel."** Many a man is not an agnostic, but he does not obey the Gospel. There are many of you people who would support what I say about agnosticism, but you do not obey the Gospel. You do not believe with real faith, which means absolute surrender to and confidence in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. You do not obey JESUS CHRIST as your Lord and Master. You do not openly confess Him as the Gospel commands. He will render vengeance to you; you shall be **"punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power!"**

Men and women, every one of us must meet GOD in fire.

Oh, to-night do you not want to meet Him in the glorious fire of the HOLY GHOST, refining you from sin, cleansing the dross and filth, illuminating you with GOD's glorious truth, warming the cold heart until it glows with holy love, energizing you with the power of GOD, and spreading wherever it goes?

Or do you wish to meet GOD in fire at that judgment day, that will try your work as to character, motive, the power that wrought it, and send all your works up in smoke, and leave you there stripped, saved **"so as by fire?"**

Or will you meet GOD in that awful fire of eternal doom, when the day comes that the same CHRIST whom you have rejected and trampled under foot comes back again in the glory of the Father, with His mighty angels, "**rendering vengeance to them that know not God and obey not the Gospel?**"

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