## TIME SERIES NO.10

# HELL & DESTRUCTION

## An ABC CLASSICS MONOGRAPH

#### NO.10 HELL -UNWANTED DESTINY

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#### INTRODUCTION

This monograph is No.10in the present series. Any such study will run into the juggernaut of huge issues which it is not possible for a man to know.

*Spurgeon* once said "We do not know the temperature of hell or the furniture of heaven". The expression seems flippant but declares a vital truth.

What is known is that "Hell" was fully understood by our Lord. He holds the keys of Hell as the prepared abode of the dead and those detained there. Into its deepest abyss the angels that fell have been consigned and one day the devil himself will be imprisoned there for 1000 years. It would appear that "Hell" is a dimension of creation where the wicked become captive to the divine fiat and await judgment which is capable of being administered there. It is in a very few passages of scripture that the resolution of the issues

of the last judgment and the final state of the soul are presented and there are issues of near insuperable complexity in these contexts. What I must say is that "Hell" is a solemn & terrible destiny. It represents the wait for and administration of irreversible judgment. It affords interim detension for both wicked angels in Tartarus ( $Zo\phi o \varsigma$ ) as Jude calls it and also wicked men in its "depths". Besides these it is used in the bible as a term(Sheol) for the temporary *abode of the righteous* during the pre-Christian era - who were translated to Paradise with the Resurrected Christ. Beyond this within its architecture the Lake of Fire is its ultimate sanction.

Scribbler Bob September 3 2013

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#### WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT HELL

#### INTRODUCTION

Our Lord Jesus gave considerable clarification on the question of how the eternal destiny of the unbelieving unregenerate and wicked is to be viewed. This study is not exhaustive but is addressed to the man in the street – and for the attention of the Christian who cares to understand a dark and often muddled subject.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor once thought to lay to rest the problem Augustine posed when he tried to think out how Christ could be in Hades and Paradise at the same time. Taylor thought of it as being in England and London simultaneously. The issues that theologians tackle do not often come to conclusions that convince all the people all the time. This one about the whereabouts of our Lord is better centred on the victory of the cross which put the finishing touch to so much - to resurrection and the church and the opening of paradise and the apprising of hell of His authority. The keys of hell were Christ's and He could easily visit heaven paradise earth and hell at his pleasure.

In this study I shall beg of you to think me not incredulous for believing that the Lord has the prerogative to create as expeditiously as the bible asserts and destroy equally smartly all that is visible to science. A corollary of the divine power Jesus asked us to contemplate was that God is able to "destroy both soul and body in Hell".

#### TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS DIFFER

Basil Atkinson who was the mentor of Wanham and Stott was one of the earliest modern scholars to espouse a position that refused to deal in eternal punishment as the way God poured out His wrath. The hard place for this doctrine is Apocalypse 20.10. The American theologian *Hughes* is perhaps the strongest exponent of this position today. John Piper and Don Carson are heavy weights who hold that eternal torture is the lot of the wicked and that they live for ever in this state. Some theologians hold to a doctrine-cum-psychology of God where His wrath is seen as indignation - a permanent dynamic aspect of His love – so that both endure eternally. The problems abutting this teaching are the "destruction of the soul" and whether the doctrine accords with or does despite to God's exercise of His *essential* nature & decree. Does God's covenant love endure for ever and is His wrath shown in expeditious final fiats or throughout eternity? Both schools are however agreed on the reality of Heaven and Hell. The parting of the ways doctrinally would come through considerations of the nature of the Second Death and Exit dispensed to the wicked at the Great White Throne and the natural immortality of the soul.

#### TOMMY TOYE

Amid the revivalist days of the 1850's and onwards to 1869 *Tommy Toya* was Ulster's premier preacher. His stronghold was the May Street pulpit whee he would announce his text and retire for a short smoke before giving a spellbinding address. He held a crowd of multiple thousands in his hand in Belfast's Botanic gardens and it is said that one thousand souls were converted on that occasion.

Toye on one occasion slid down his steep polished oak banister with consummate ease and then endeavoured to mount to his rostrum by the same slippery wooden rails-but without success. He declared that it was exactly so in respect of Hell and heaven. It was very simple to descend by the broad way but only with difficulty could a man find and keep going upward and onward on the narrow way.

Hell or "Hades" is a Greek word that is made up of "a" deprivative and "etδeiv" (to see) hence it a dark realm and one where the inhabitants can no longer relate to the experience of deciding their destiny(cf. also Hades in Jude 6 & 13). The Abyss (Rev. 20.3 with is a Greek word applied to that which has no bottom and to this prison Satan is consigned for 1000 years. For the first our Lord has the keys (Apoc.1.18) and from it souls will be released to appear at the Great White Throne judgment(Apoc.20.13). Besides these we read of the "Lake of Fire (or) Fire and

Brimstone"(Apoc.20.10,14,15 and 21.8). This final destination is not one which is spoken of as requiring keys for which reason among others it is well named the "Second Death". Both Fire and Brimstone are referred to in the destruction of Sodom and are presented as instruments of judgment as opposed to holding institutions of the Pantocrator or Sovereign  $\Delta \varepsilon \sigma \pi \sigma \tau \eta \varsigma$  of the universe.

#### FRIENDS IN BOTH PLACES

Heaven is a place of consummate bliss and hell is a place of torment. Many a man has glibly remarked "I have friends in both places." Whilst that might be true there is absolutely no good reason to repeat the disasterous decisions and live the godless life of those who have ended up in hell. When Dives got to hell his mission in the afterlife was to prevent his own brothers arriving at the place of torment where his own past sins bothered him terribly and the only Christlike person he ever knew was never far from his mind. "Send Lazarus", said he, "that he may touch my tongue". On earth dogs licked Lazarus' sores. In hell Dives felt like a dog and he sought just one tiny little kind act that would show the poor man cared about him. Lazarus hands had been extended toward him over and over again. Now despite his pleading he was in the most dread trouble. Friends you say in that aweful place! Pray God none of your friends will ever end up in hell seek the Lord and seek their peace so it may never happen!

#### JESUS PUT HELL ON THE AGENDA

The Lord spoke more often than any modern preacher on Hell. No Jewish rabbi of His period treated the subject with such respect. The Lord indicated that "Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels but until the judgment of the Great White Throne Sheol of the wicked is where the unrighteous are confined until they appear at the judgment seat. Torment of that sort we have been contemplating in thinking about Lazarus comes in two varieties in connection with Hell. First in this narrative Jesus gave of the rich man "Dives" and the poor man "Lazarus". May I insist on the historicity of this narrative by citing the precision of the original text. These two men are described as " $\tau\iota\varsigma$ " without the acute accent- that marks them out as real persons by contrast with the woman

who lost her coin or the shepherd with 100 sheep who are *personae dramatis*.

- (i) The first type of "torment" then is that of this story in Luke 16 and it figures under the Greek verb  $o\delta v v \alpha \omega$  "suffering in respect of action mind or speech" linked in general terms to the deeds done in the body and to the error of one's ways.
- (ii) The second form of torment is referred to in the Apocalypse and is defined under the terms
- "Basavos and Basaviso and refers more particularly to that on which the character of the person tested is to be judged. This ultimate touchstone of righteousness and truth is Christ.
- (iii) The difference to highlight in this instance is the relevance for the realm of the unrighteous dead brought about by the victorious atoning work of Christ. This as Peter says was proclaimed to those abiding in Sheol after his resurrection. After our Lord's death and prior to His glorious resurrection He went "in the spirit" and preached to those at the fountain head of history who refused the earliest generations of prophetic preachers in gross disobedience. He "marched in victory"  $\pi o \rho \epsilon \upsilon \theta \epsilon \iota \varsigma$  into hell and declared a message which spread through all its corridors - after which those in hell thought as Peter goes on to remark in 1Peter4 5-6 as men conscious of the very same prophesied (and now fulfilled) basis of judgment as men alive in the flesh recognise in the gospel. The further consequence was that they could bow the knee in hell(for to Jesus every knee shall bow (even in realms of lower dimension than or under the earth).

## TEMPORALITY VERSUS ETERNAL TORMENT AND THE LAKE OF FIRE

The temporality of torment. There are no other forms of torment after death than the two attested above and if you will carefully follow the facts set out in this section you will have evidence that confirms their character and use.

- (1) Those who worship the beast and his image and receive the mark of the beast will drink the wine of God's fury poured into the cup of His wrath and they will have been tested with fire and brimstone or judgment in the presence of the angels and in the immediate presence of the lamb (at His coming to overcome Antichrist and end Armageddon). That is to say the third war of the world and judgment of nations will worst and requite them and as if this were not enough the reserved wrath of the Great White Throne lies ahead of them (Apoc.14.9-11). Pending that these faithless ones live on in Sheol under Βασανος trial "day and night" during the ages or generations of the millennium (after which the earth sun and moon pass away) but during all that temporal period they live on in Hell or Sheol without αναπαυσις or relaxation and peace from the war they fought against the Lord and His Christ. The smoke of their torment is witness and testimony throughout the millennial era to the trifling worthless nature of their rebellion and their defeat serves to enhance through those ages the glory of Christ.
- (2) The beast and the false prophet are to be captured by the forces of the King of Kings at the climax of the Armageddon campaign and summarily consigned without mercy and without the privilege of living to appear before the Great White Throne to the fiery lake of burning sulphur. Their idolatry and deception

- warranted no mercy and they shall be no more (Apoc.19.19-20 and 2 Thess.2.8).
- (3) Satan himself is dealt with in a similar summary manner at the end of the millennial era. The armies of that still distant day are to be gathered from earth's margins in a concerted frontal offensive against the most glorious city every developed on earth - the city of Jerusalem in its final resplendent form - but fire devours the armies and the devil is to be cast into the Lake of burning sulphur. This spells the last notice of the devil in history and reality. The scripture text is mistranslated at this point in verse 10b. I give it as my opinion that scholars over the years have seen all torments as one and the same and bundled expressions together somewhat carelessly. The text reads "And the devil – the one that deceived them or took them out of orbit as wanderers from the right was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *were cast*. They (the beast and false prophet) will have been tested (in the *Bασανος* manner) "day and night"(i.e. while the temporal purpose of God runs on and before its passing away) for era after era. Readers should observe that the beast and false prophet were consigned to the Lake of Fire at the end of the Armageddon campaign prior to the inception of the millennium not as the devil is to be at the end of that era. Readers should also observe secondly that the text does not say that the devil will be tormented by any such **Bασανος** test – his tour will be at an end. He who knew he had but a short time *ολιγον καιρον* at the end of the tribulation in this divine finale is destroyed (Apoc. 20.7-10).

(4) The Great White Throne judgment ensues when the world we know as earth and sky is gone for ever. There was no place in the dimension we know of for the visible system of our world - concerning which science affirms so much. As it was expeditiously created it is expeditiously dissolved. In the eternal dimension that remains firm and secure forever (for things apparent were not made of things visible and things that are susceptible to being shaken and shifted (created things) pass away whilst things that cannot be shaken remain. This judgment takes place in a heavenly dimension where God's throne is set out with its angel recorders and many books. The inerrant divine records "have been opened". The corpses of all the spiritually dead who lived and died outside relationship with Almighty God in Christ will be recalled and the spirits will be released from hell so that the entire phalanx of mankind comes before Christ with whom we have to do in great fear in the old Adam state. They will kneel in abject fear and regret because to Him "every knee will bow. To look on the lamb in that state would be utterly overwhelming - Paul's Damascus Road experience when the Spirit was abroad in conviction would not vaguely compare. This is utter finality. The books recording works of the flesh will lie open - the book of Life and the Lamb's Book of Life will confirm the utter failure of all these - both small and great. No serious delay will be necessary. This is "the Great and terrible day of judgment". Each individual case will have been doubly checked εκαστος κατα τα εργα and according to  $Bi\beta\lambda io \alpha\lambda\lambda o$  and those not written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Body and soul may now suffer

destruction as the Lord said. This destruction απολυμι Matt. 10.28 differs from "loosing" of one from another απολυω as when Christ died Matt. 26.61. Here is not the end of a bit of humanity and the maintenance of other bits but the loss of all. There is absolutely no mention of torment. The sequel to "Depart from me" would seem to mark the conclusion of all experience of God.

(5) The *Αλφα* and *Ωμεγα* reality emerges in the New Jerusalem where the Alpha of life in the city begins as a glorious experience for those thirsty for more of Jesus - they drink at the spring of the water of life and inherit this joy as over-comers. But as for the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars at the coming or Parousia of Christ - these are excepted from salvation's joys, the millennial rule and the holy city and their ultimate exit is to the Lake of fire - the Second Death. The middle voice of καιω affirms that hell is lighted (prepared) in all its power to extirpate [Hebrew ABADDON] in the second death.

#### THE VALUE OF PERSPECTIVE

Our Lord Jesus, who came to remedy the deepest woes of a perishing race confronted this subject more than any other. Within His teaching recorded in Matthew and in the Apocalypse we will find the essential strands that taken together will produce the intricate embroidery of a doctrine that has fallen in tatters and now and again surfaces in preaching or discussion as ragged loose ends of thought. Sometimes theologians try to fit the jig saw of the Apocalyptic pieces together from an a-millennial perspective.

Others simply receive it on the appreciable grounds of  $\alpha \imath \omega \nu \imath o \varsigma$  (life-long, age-long, eternal) that there is torture and that torture is for ever - full stop. The trouble is that this interpretation counters and aces the judgment of "death" which must be re-interpreted as life.

The μετα ταυτα divisions of the tribulation story of the Apocalypse bring this book into sharp focus as is the case with the gospel of John and the sequential ministry of our Lord. The gospel covers the 3.5 years of Jesus ministry as the Gracious Saviour of men and the Apocalypse covers the short 7 or so years of Christ's action as the Glorious Judge of all.

## THE CORROBORATING FACTOR THAT CREATED ETERNAL LIFE

The greatest verse in the bible says "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not *perish* but have everlasting life. The nub of God's great rescue plan centres on His love for the creature He made in His own image whom He would have live in His full likeness. The hard clay in the potter's hand is man's profound un-relinquished disobedience - our sinful rebellion. The reality of apostasy and of perishing and by our own works travelling on the broad road to *destruction* was acutely uncomfortable to God and to prevent it Father and Son and Holy Ghost entered an unprecedented covenant of love and salvation which was reaffirmed in Gethsemane and executed in face of that wrench of love Isaiah describes as "feeling sick". So Almighty God in His great love resisted cancellation of the unprecedented ignominy, humiliation and grief of the Son of His love and through the most signally refined obedience of all time generated and granted pardon to every soul of man who claimed Christ's reconciling and

atoning death as his entrance to a new relationship with God for forgiveness peace and eternal life.

#### NATURAL IMMORTALITY?

Many Christians down the years have taken refuge in Plato's *Phaedo* which is penned by *Socrates'* friend Phaedon of Elis who was by the bedside of the philosopher after he took hemlock comforting himself with the specious comfort of reason which cannot produce anything as beautiful as a tree and certainly is not a divine guarantee to ensure the continuance of the life of the soul into eternity.

One of the main themes in the *Phaedo* is the idea that the soul is immortal. Socrates offers four arguments for the soul's immortality:

- 1. The Cyclical Argument, or Opposites Argument explains that forms are eternal and unchanging, and as the soul always brings life, then it must not die, and is necessarily "imperishable". As the body is mortal and is subject to physical death, the soul must be its indestructible opposite. Plato then suggests the analogy of fire and cold. If the form of cold is imperishable, and fire, its opposite, was within close proximity, it would have to withdraw intact as does the soul during death. This could be likened to the idea of the opposite charges of magnets.
- 2. The *Theory of Recollection* explains that we possess some non empirical knowledge (e.g. The Form of Equality) at birth, implying **the soul existed before birth to** carry that knowledge. Another account of the theory is found in Plato's *Meno*, although in that case

- Socrates implies anamnesis (previous knowledge of everything) whereas he is not so bold in *Phaedo*.
- 3. The *Affinity Argument*, explains that invisible, immortal, and **incorporeal things are different from visible,** mortal, and corporeal things. Our soul is of the former, while our body is of the latter, so when our bodies die and decay, our soul will continue to live.
- 4. The Argument from form of Life, or The Final Argument explains that the Forms, incorporeal and static entities, are the cause of all things in the world, and all things participate in Forms. For example, beautiful things participate in the Form of Beauty; the number four participates in the Form of the Even, etc. The soul, by its very nature, participates in the Form of Life, which means the soul can never die.

Though God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life it does not follow that man though in the image of God would live for ever. The image is already marred, The soul can be destroyed. On this scripture itself is clear.

We also read in connection with man's life "Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat *and live for ever*: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Clearly Natural Immortality is difficult if not impossible to defend in face of this decisive action of

God to ensure its prevention on any other grounds than His salvation. It is not in the human genome.

### THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE SOUL SURVIVES NORMAL DEATH

When man dies as Solomon said "The spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiates 12.7) The spirit of man is like a candle – God can set it alight and give it illumining powers as conscience intelligence will and emotion and extinguish it. Man is thus a little lower than the angels and different from the animal creation around him in that that part of creation was not inbreathed like man. Thus as the patriarchs said from very ancient time the righteous went to their fathers and as the Lord Himself averred like Lazarus those of faith were found with Abraham(cf. James 3.6 with Lk.16.24) of whom Jesus said "I am the God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob" insofar as they were very much alive in the heavenly and spiritual dimension. Thus the souls of men entered Sheol and as the narrative of Luke 16 affirms two parts of this separate world stood divided by a great Chasm until the victorious time when our Lord using his own authority and keys of Sheol drew the sons of Abraham into Paradise and apprised those who were sometime disobedient of His will that they live as those on earth who are called to humble themselves before Messiah. This was no way an offer of redemption but a call to acknowledge their actions against the authority of the Son under whom their Βασανος trial would heighten the rueful "human deeds" αδυναω trial frame by which their pains arose from wickedness worked against others.

## ETERNAL PAIN AND TORTURE HAS ITS ONLY VALIDITY WITHIN THE WILL OF GOD

The first pre-requisite for eternal torture must find its ground in the will of God. It is clearly not the will of God that sinful men & women should live eternally with irremediable maladies & malignancies and that was expressed loud and clear in Genesis.

#### DIVINE SANCTION AGAINST EVERLASTING SIN

The roadblock to eternal torture is that God put absolute parameters on the obtaining of eternal life in the matter of having the Son of God as one's redeemer and in him receiving regeneration and eternal life. One has to ask if it is to be removed. The argument that "eternal death" is a valid "live" experience must face the fact that *in the knowledge of God* is life. The "Second Death" presents as an irrecoverable utter loss of life insofar as any sign guarantee or warrant for continued life is beyond establishing in face of the divine decree as stated in Genesis 3.3, 3.22 & 3.24.

#### SEPARATION AND JUDGMENT DIFFER IN TIME-SCALE

The dictat of our Lord (Matthew 25.41) when He judges nations as the "sheep and goats" parable foretells respective eternal felicity and fate consigning the wicked to hell. That fate is attested in an act 1000 years before the Great White Throne [where it will be sealed]. The parable defines the Lord's response to people among many nations who acted without compassion towards His people and His witnesses. These persons are cursed to the end of perishing καταραομαι and it would appear that they will suffer summary judgment on six counts. Their destiny is "the agelong fire"(cf. Isaiah34.10-11) which is described as that

which Satan and his angels will suffer at the beginning of the millennium. In verse 46 the effect of this punishment is given as κολασις which *is correction or chastisement*. This is not final which is demonstrable because Satan will be released at the end of the millennium so these wicked would come up for judgment in their turn at the Great White Throne. The Lake of Fire hangs like a Damocles sword over all such as are under the curse.

#### WHAT'S WORSE THAN HELL?

#### MYSTERY DESTINY AND THE LAKE OF FIRE

"What is hell? I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love." Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov. This literary notion conveys an element of truth but by comparison with Luke 16 it comes far short of the whole truth. As to the ultimate destiny of the wicked any eternal decree vested in the character of God must have purpose at its heart and shall be based not on a maverick principle but relate even by exclusion to the judgment that brings in a new heaven and earth the eternal home of righteousness and to the glory of God. That which is not in keeping with the divine order of eternity when all things are made new shall not enter but is dispatched to the Lake of Fire. Every reference to the Lake of Fire brings us to a dead end where neither cry of woe nor prayer of repentance is heard any more. The Lake of Fire has no keys nor any exit door. The blank that we draw is either a blank on information divinely imposed or an utter end of life. That in camera finality coordinates with "making all things new" and the end of this universe of whirling orbs and of hell itself in the Lake of Fire which is the Second Death. The second death is described as having "authority" (εξουσια) namely the license as would be invested in a lower magistrate besides the means

to destroy both body and soul which will be been raised unto judgment. This power may be by sole prerogative in God's ultimate word or invested in angels or simply established by God who ordains both the end and the means.

Our Lord Jesus specifically said "Fear not him who can kill the body(The murderer, the Old Serpent) but fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell". This statement of Christ accords with Solomon's combination of "hell and destruction" in Proverbs 15.11 and 27.20. The ultimate power of hell lies not in *its remanding of the soul* tortured in the fearful ways described above but *in its final sanction* to give effect to destruction.

#### THE DAMNATION OF GEHENNA - JESUS WARNING

Our Lord posed a question to the Scribes and Pharisees of his era asking them how the meant to escape the judgment crisis  $\kappa\rho\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$  of damnation. (Matthew 23.33). This comment was pertinent to His own imminent death at their hands which was the last in a long line of inhumane and wicked killings of heaven sent prophets. As snakes fear the fire these were warned they should fear for their eternal future. Bodies of the children were anciently burned in the valley of Gehenna but the wicked might expect an end much more severe in hell. Even the careless ones of the cities of Chorazin and Capernaum would be found in Hell (Matt. 11.23, Lk 10.15).

## THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL AND THE RETREAT OF HELL

The apostles and Christian disciples within the church carried the good news worldwide within a single generation. Our Lord assured us that the *Gates of hell would not prevail* against His church. Today the gospel has reached most lands around the world. Satan knows he has a short time and we can

expect a powerful Anti-Christ to arise in future time when the Church is taken to the Bridal feast. The Antichrist cannot appear until Christ re-appears just as at the first advent there were no anti Christ figures until the Lord went to glory. When the maelstrom of tribulation hits this earth and its inhabitants subsequent to the rapture the parcel of judgments and divine wrath recorded for us in the Apocalypse will be unleashed. Then will the full force of Satan and demand the interposition of angels and holy ones form heaven. Now as never before the Apocalypse needs to be read and we must tell this generation of the gravity of the battle for the souls of men right now and in this generation which if only on the strength of the prophecy of Matthew 24.34, Mark13.30 & Luke 21.32 may be the last before our Lord returns.

#### THE DESTINY OF WHICH WE NEED TO BE SURE

"Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. His blood was shed to deliver you from Satan and sin and the grave. He can win over every besetting sin and set you free. Trust him and head for **heaven and home!**" Hell is an abominable vexatious experience but ultimate wrath awaits the day of judgment of many hymns give timely warning.

#### **WRATH**

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord He is trampling out the vintage where the **grapes of wrath** are stored.

He has loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword
Our God is marching on.
Glory Glory Hallelujah
Glory Glory Hallelujah
Glory Glory Hallelujah
Our God is marching on! [Julia Ward Howe]

#### **HEAVEN**

Over the sunset mountains

Heaven awaits for me
Over the sunset mountains
Jesus my Saviour I'll see
Toiling will be ended
Shadows will flee away
Sorrow will be forgotten
O what a wonderful day!

[John Peterson]

#### **FINIS**

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