

## The Fullness of Christ

"The Glory of Christ in Heaven," or,  
"Joseph's Exaltation in Egypt"

By Octavius Winslow

"Hurry, return to my father and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. Come down to me right away! You will live in the land of Goshen so you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all that you have. I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you and your household will come to utter poverty.' "

Then Joseph said, "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that I really am Joseph! Tell my father how I am honored here in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen, and bring him to me quickly." Genesis 45:9-13

The reflective reader of this narrative will not fail to have remarked the sagacious wisdom and true delicacy of Joseph, in adopting a gradual rather than a premature development of his entrancing story. Nothing could have been more consummate in skill, exquisite in taste, or perfect in execution. It was not by a sudden and immediate revelation that all the links in the chain of events tracing his marvellous history were uplifted from the sea of mystery which submerged them, and made to pass before his brethren. A disclosure so unpremeditated and abrupt would have failed in awaking those reflections, producing those impressions, and securing that moral discipline in his brethren which he, once their victim, now their deliverer and teacher, sought to accomplish. Their minds stunned by surprise, and their feelings petrified with fear- the incidents of the past, crowding upon their memory with startling vividness, and the just consequences of their conduct in ghastly horror flitting before their eye- the details, too, of the history so astounding and touching, would have conspired to disarm them of all mental power of examining and weighing the facts and evidences of the case, and thus they would have been incapable of recognizing his person, and of accepting his statement. They might have ignored the story as a myth, and have denounced the man as an impostor.

The Christian student of his Bible will trace a striking analogy in this to a peculiarity in the mode of our Lord's instruction of His disciples. His revelations were then, as His teaching is, for the most part, now, gradual and progressive. In His personal instructions He seldom declared His Messiahship, or revealed His

truth instantaneously. A few select instances alone occurred, as rare as they were striking, when, to illustrate the greatness and condescension of His grace, He, as in a moment, uplifted the veil; and declared His Messiahship, and, by a sudden flash of light, filled the mind with truth, and the heart with love.

How much of Christ, of His glory and kingdom, did the penitent malefactor learn in that hour of lingering agony on the cross! Ah! no marvel! he was so near the Divine Sun of Truth and Righteousness and Love, as to bathe his soul in the full beams of its setting glory! But our Lord's instruction of His disciples, generally, was elementary and gradual. In the words of the evangelist, "He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it." He saw that their minds were not prepared to receive instantaneously, and in its perfect revelation, all that He had to teach them; therefore, by a process which graduated the new and marvellous truths He inculcated to their opening understanding, and by which one doctrine of the gospel evolved another, He gently instructed them in the fact of His Messiahship, in the nature of His kingdom, and in the truths, principles, and precepts of His religion.

Such is still the mode of our Lord's teaching. The seal of divine truth gradually is broken, and its light, like the day-dawn, deepening in effulgence to its meridian glory, slowly, yet steadily advances, until, from the babe in knowledge, we reach the stature of the fulness of Christ. Pause, admire and adore the wisdom, gentleness, and skill of Jesus here. He remembers how unlike all other truth is Divine revelation; that, while there is much that transcends the loftiest grasp of the human understanding to comprehend, it yet demands the fullest belief of the heart.

Remembering, then, the infinite vastness of truth, and the dwarfed faculties of the human mind, the dulness of the understanding to perceive, and the slowness of the heart to believe the great things of His Word, He teaches with a skill, a patience, and a gentleness which has no parallel, and which renders His truth so glorious, His discipline so welcome, Himself so precious to those who become His humble and willing disciples. "Lord, in Your school let me be taught- at Your feet would I sit- the lessons of Your love and the truths of Your word let me humbly, believingly, and fully receive, for who teaches like You?"

We reach another stage in Joseph's history, and glorious is its shadow of Christ and His Church- the EXALTATION and GLORY to which he was advanced in Egypt "Hurry, return to my father and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt.... And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt.'" This was no vain boast, no exaggerated description of Joseph's condition; it was an accomplished fact that Joseph was all that he now portrayed himself to be, and the announcement of his exaltation and glory was to calm their minds and command their confidence, confirm their faith and inspire their hopes.

We see a marvellous display of tact, wisdom, and goodness, in placing the fact of his exaltation, dignity, and power in the very foreground of his story. But for this, how could he have reassured their timid minds, have quelled their rising fears, and have established them in the truth which it was his great object to impress? Had he simply told them the story of his abasement, describing his poverty, delineating the perils, temptations, and sorrows through which he had passed, he would not have quelled a single fear, or have inspired one ray of hope. But when he laid before them his personal dignity, his unmistakable glory and power, the fact became palpable, inspiring, and confirming to their minds that he was in very deed Joseph, their brother.

But, beloved, a greater than Joseph is here. To Him let me now direct your believing eyes. It is our dear Lord's purpose that His Church should have scriptural, spiritual, and enlarged views of what He is, what His possessions are, and what is the extent of His power. And I do not hesitate to say that scriptural, stable views of the dignity of Christ's person, of the glory of our Emmanuel, of what His wealth is, of what His power is, form the very foundation of our faith in Him. I receive the salvation of Christ, I rest in the atonement of Christ, I accept the promises of Christ, I believe in the coming of Christ, just in proportion as my faith believes that He is actually all that His revealed word describes Him to be.

If my views of the glory of Christ are defective, if my faith in the illimitable power of Christ is contracted, there will be a consequent and corresponding feebleness in the realization I have of Christ. But let my faith firmly grasp the truth that He is what He declares Himself to be- that all this honor, all this glory, all this dignity, all this power belong to Him- then, without hesitation and doubt, I can draw from His fulness, receive His assurances, and look forward with confidence to the blessed day when Christ who is my life shall appear, and I shall appear also with Him in glory.

Let us, then, for a moment, turn our attention to two views of Christ illustrated by this part of Joseph's history. And, first, how did Joseph reach this elevation, the announcement of which he now makes to his brethren, and through them to his father? He reached that glory, dignity, and power along the gloomy, rugged path of the deepest abasement and sorrow. Look at the abasement of Christ, the humiliation through which He passed to His present glory. The mediatorial exaltation and glory to which our Lord has arrived in heaven, was reached only by a pathway never before trodden by human feet- the profoundest abasement, humiliation, and grief. I verily believe that the saints of God do meditate too little on the humiliation of Christ. The humiliation of Christ involved all that would have involved us but for His voluntary suretyship.

The bearing of sin, the exhausting of the curse, the endurance of every form of indignity, the wrath of Jehovah, the sorrow of His soul, the agonies of the cross, the assaults of hell, the conquest of death- all met in the humiliation and abasement of Jesus. But it is necessary for our high appreciation of what Christ

has done for us, and of the glory to which He himself has arrived, that we linger much in the valley of His humiliation. Our views of His glory, our conception of His exaltation, our faith in His love, will be graduated by the spiritual, deep, vivid conceptions we have of what He passed through to save us. Oh, then, I do beseech you, beloved, do not slightly scan, superficially study the path of gloom and sorrow, abasement and temptation, your Lord and Savior trod, to deliver you therefrom.

Remember, our dear Lord Jesus was a bond servant; think what that means. He was tempted, oh, how fearfully, by the Evil One of this ungodly world. He was traduced, belied, slandered, and imprisoned. But what picture of humiliation can your imagination paint, or tongue describe, that the Lord Jesus did not pass through to bring us to glory? Link with this view of Christ's abasement the disciplinary process through which every follower of Christ must, in some degree, pass to reach the glory that awaits him. There must be the emptying, the humbling, the abasing of our natural pride, the subjection of our rebellious will, the prostration of all our fond conceit of personal goodness and righteousness before we know what the true glory is.

Have you trod this valley of abasement? Has the pride of your heart been humbled? the rebellion of your will subdued? the opposition of your nature to God and His holy law vanquished and overcome? Oh, has the Spirit of God emptied you, taught you your sinfulness, nothingness, and led you to God's pardoning mercy, and Christ's justifying righteousness, through the deep, dark valley of soul humiliation and abasement? No man can spring to the apex of God's glory but from the base of his own natural vileness, emptiness, and poverty; and when God brings him low, lays him in the dust, empties him from vessel to vessel, oh, it is the sure and certain prelude to an uplifting, an exalting, and glory infinitely beyond all conception!

Job strikingly says, "When men are cast down, then You shall say, There is lifting up." Mark that in your personal history. When the Lord by some overwhelming providence, some humiliating and trying circumstance in your history, casts you down, infer not that all these things are against you; it is the very process God is taking to lift you up; and as the darkest period of the night ushers in the dawn of day, so the gloomiest stage of the believer's life is often that which precedes the bursting upon him of the sun of God's goodness, mercy, and love, in all its effulgence. It was through this process of humiliation that Jesus passed to the glories of which now I will speak. What expressive words are these, "You shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt!" But a greater glory than Joseph's is here—the glory, the eternal glory, of our blessed Jesus; of which glory, if you have a vital union with Christ, you are now, and shall be more completely hereafter, the sharer.

Beloved, for a moment, let us dwell on this glory of our Jesus. He has now forever passed the valley of humiliation. For Him there is no more soul-sorrow, or

mental gloom, no more sighing or tears, no more human insult or Satanic assault; He has passed beyond the reach of His humiliation. And where is He? Let faith plume her pinions and endeavor to reach His blest abode. For a moment contemplate the place and scene of this glory; it is heaven, heaven itself. The apostle in his beautiful argument in the Hebrews, illustrating the superiority of Christ's priesthood, is anxious to enforce this truth on the minds of his readers, that Christ had entered "into heaven itself," into the highest heaven, the paradise of God, the place where Jehovah Himself dwells. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself." There Jesus has entered.

The scene of His glory is where the Father resides, where holy angels congregate, where the spirits of just men made perfect dwell, where all is perfect purity, and perfect love, and perfect light, and perfect glory. There is no danger, I apprehend, of trespassing on the region of fancy, in our most glowing anticipation of heaven. It will infinitely transcend the most poetic, the most sublime, the most transcendently glowing pictures the mind has ever conceived. We should make ourselves more familiar with the nature, employments, and glory of heaven, since we are, through grace, traveling there, and shall soon be there. We should know something of the home we are to occupy, the society with which we shall mingle, and the scene in which we shall be employed. Oh, could our thoughts and affections travel there more frequently, fervently, and hopefully, methinks we should come back to earth realizing what poor, contemptible things those are who constantly seek to veil faith's eye to our future, to limit the scope of our minds, and chain us down to these inferior objects so soon and forever to be relinquished! Yes, the place, the theater of Christ's exaltation and glory is heaven, the heaven of heavens; there is His throne, there are His saints who have gone to glory, and there soon we all shall be.

In connection with this scene of His glory, contemplate His position of dignity. He is at the right hand of God. Great stress is laid on this in the Bible. "Having purged our sins, He is forever set down on the right hand of God." Do not think that this description of Christ's position in heaven is given without especial and deep significance. There is nothing revealed in the Bible, especially relating to our Lord, that is not of infinite moment, and worthy of the profoundest study. Why are we expressly told that the Lord and Savior sat down at the right hand of God the Father? That we might realize the resources of grace and power we have in heaven, and that this is the dignity and glory for which we should be constantly training, and to which we should be constantly aspiring.

We participate, in virtue of our covenant relation, in all the dignity, glory, and wealth of Christ. As He is exalted, so are we. As He is honored, so are we. As He is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, so, virtually, are we. Oh, beloved, Christ and His saints are one. The Bridegroom has raised the Bride to His highest rank, wealth, and power. All things are ours, because we are Christ's. Think of this when the world hates, maligns, and persecutes you. Think of this in

your poverty, obscurity, and earthly lowliness. Think of this when the world ridicules your saintship, and the saints themselves either question or disown it because you see not as they see, and accept not what they accept. Think that you are identified with Christ in His exaltation and glory. Remember that the Premier of Heaven, the Governor, not of all Egypt, but of the Universe, is your Head, your Redeemer, your Brother; that He wears your nature still; and that though He now dwells in glory resplendent, encircled by celestial spirits hymning His high praise, yet He has a human heart, a human sympathy; and that there beams from His eye not one glance of love less tender, that there breathes from His lips not one word of sympathy less soothing; and that all the power He possesses, and the scepter He sways, and the resources He commands are possessed, and exerted over all flesh, that He might give you eternal life.

And what is He doing there? How is He occupied? He is incessantly pleading on your behalf, interceding for your well-being with a love that never falters, with uplifted hands that never weary, bending upon you a glance infinitely more tender and wakeful than the mother watching her sick and suffering babe. "He ever lives to make intercession for us."

In addition to this, we must think of "the riches of His glory," or, His glorious riches. Were all the treasures and wealth of Egypt at the command of Joseph? Could he not only fill the empty sacks of his brethren with the food they needed, but also with gold and silver? Could he give them more than they required, or even asked, because his possessions were so vast, his generosity as boundless as his affluence?

Forget not the mediatorial possessions of our glorified Christ, the illimitable extent of His wealth, the inexhaustibleness of His resources. The Head of creation- all creation's wealth is His. The Head of the Church- all the Church's fulness is His. The Elder Brother of His Father's family- all worlds constitute His estate. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." All the riches of wisdom, all the riches of grace, all the riches of love, all the riches of glory are in Christ's hands, held by Him for behalf of His brethren. God has raised Him up for us, to keep us alive in famine. Why need we be cast down when the cruise of oil and the barrel of meal fails, seeing Jesus can either remove the poverty or supply the necessity? When there is no food, He can take away our hunger, or meet the hunger with an ample supply. He can either avert a necessity, or provide for it when it arises. He can prevent a famine of any one good in our experience, or when the famine comes, unlock the granary of His boundless wealth, and fill our sacks, not with corn only, but also with silver and gold, always giving us more-never less- than we either asked or expected.

Jesus delights to show us how rich we are in Him- that all things are ours because His is ours, and we are His. Oh, why, then, should we permit our faith to succumb to trying circumstances, as though our Jesus was not alive, having all the treasures of the everlasting covenant, all the fulness of the Godhead, all the

resources of the universe in His keeping, and at His disposal? Look at the starry sky- Jesus strewed it with its jewelry. Look at that enchanting landscape- Jesus enameled it with its loveliness. Look at that cloud-capped mountain- Jesus reared it. Look at that beautiful lily- Jesus painted it. Look at that soaring bird- Jesus feeds it. He, with whom is all this strength and beauty, is your Brother. Are not you- loved and chosen from all eternity, ransomed with His blood, inhabited by His Spirit, His own brother- better and dearer than these? Why, then, these fears? why this distrust? Arise and open your sack's mouth, and see what is there- food for earth's pilgrimage, and gold and silver for heaven's blessedness; GRACE and GLORY are given you.

Take heart, then, and exercise simple faith in this great and precious truth, and it will relieve you from many a perplexity and feeling of despondency by which you may be assailed. Try and realize, "I have but to go to Jesus to ask for my present requirements; He has all temporal and spiritual wealth at His disposal, and holds it as the Mediator of the Church." Do you think that if you come to Him with your burden of sin, with the dark veil of sorrow on your spirit, with the crushing weight of earthly care on your mind, and humbly bend the knee before His mercy-seat, and ask Him who is exalted at the right hand of all power, authority, and glory, that He will refuse you? Then He must cease to be your Brother, must vacate His seat in heaven, renounce His authority, and change from what He is!

But while He is there, and until He appears again, all He requires of you is to bring to His fulness your emptiness, to His sympathy your grief, to His unerring wisdom your embarrassment, and to His sheltering wing your temptations and trials. All He asks is that you Honor Him by recognizing His exaltation, glory, and authority, and by spreading your case before Him in the humble confidence of a child. Listen to His words- "I am the Lord God that brought you up out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."

There is another feature in this part of our narrative which strikingly and beautifully illustrates the ruling providence of God in human history. How beautifully Joseph brings out this truth- "God has made me lord of all Egypt!" Beloved, God is in history- in every man's history- is in your history. He is in every event, and circumstance, and incident of life. Whatever that history be, God arranged it, shaped it, and tinted it. Is it dark? He pencilled it, with its somber hues. Is it bright? He has thrown upon the canvas those beautiful colors. Are they blended? He mingled and harmonized them. Recognize and acknowledge, adore, love, trust, and glorify Him for all, and in all. "Acknowledge the Lord in all your ways." Beware of that practical atheism which excludes God from His own world- which excludes Him from your individual history. He is not only in national and social, but He is as much in personal events of life, shaping, guiding, overruling each and all.

But there is a vital and spiritual truth taught us here. I refer to the union of the Father with Christ in the grand redemption of the Church, as illustrated by those

words of Joseph to his brethren, "God has made me lord of all Egypt." There was a perfect concurrence of the Father's will, and mind, and heart, with the work, abasement, and glory of Jesus. It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the Father that Jesus was delivered unto death. The Father bruised Him, put Him to grief; it was by the power of the Father that He was raised from the dead; and as the reward of faithful service, of an accomplished mission, He was exalted by the Father at His own right hand, far above principalities and powers. Thus there was a perfect unity of mind and heart between the Father and the Son in the great work Christ has accomplished; and consequently the exalted and endeared views you have of Jesus should be associated with like views of God; every high conception you have of the love and glory of the Son, ought equally to be a high conception of the love and glory of the Father.

Never forget, beloved, that every step the Lord Jesus Christ took- from the moment He left the Divine bosom of ineffable love, to the moment He re-ascended from Tabor's mount back to His heavenly home, the Father went with Him. Therein we trace the love, the grace, the glory of our Heavenly Father, and can read in a new light, and interpret with increased meaning and brightness, our Lord's own precious words, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father."

But we reach in the second point of the narrative the JOYOUS MESSAGE which Joseph transmits to his aged father. What was this? "Hurry and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not, and you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near unto me, . . . and there will I nourish you." Goshen was that part of the land of Egypt that lay the nearest to Canaan; it was a fat land, a land of plenty and of peace; it was the best of the land to which Joseph intended that his father and his brethren should emigrate. He would not give them the worst; he had it in his power to give them the best, and the best they should have.

The Lord Jesus, our Brother, is prepared to give us, His dear people, the best inheritance it is in His power to bestow. He gives us the best in this life of spiritual blessing, and the best of glory in the life that is to come. It is a good land, the true Goshen, into which the Lord Jesus Christ brings His brethren. Shall I cite the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God," beloved, as illustrating this? Oh, what a feast of fat things, what a banquet costly and rich, plentiful and free, is the gospel of Christ! In bringing you into experience of the gospel, into what a spiritual Goshen does the Lord bring you! Consider the glorious doctrines of grace- full pardon -free justification- adoption- sanctification. Consider, too, the Divine precepts of the gospel, regulating, controlling, sanctifying our walk and conversation in this life.

Consider the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, soothing, cheering, comforting us in this vale of tears. Truly it is into a good and rich land



we are led when by the Eternal Spirit we are led into a heartfelt acquaintance with the riches and fulness of the gospel. There is no spiritual need of the soul which the provisions of the gospel of Jesus do not meet. For our wounds it is a balm; for our fears it is a cordial; for our battles it is an armor; for our soul's hunger and thirst it is manna from heaven and water from the Rock. "O Lord, we bless You for the gospel! It is a feast of fat things, a mine of inexhaustible wealth, a spring of all consolation, a good and pleasant land, bathed in the sunshine and laden with the fruit of eternal summer."

And then, O beloved, into what a rich, spiritual Goshen Jesus brings us when He brings us into experimental acquaintance with Himself! Oh, to know Jesus; to have the least degree of spiritual- a heartfelt acquaintance with Christ- a full Christ, a present Christ, a compassionate Christ, a powerful Christ- is what an angel's tongue never can unfold! Our own silence is, perhaps, the most eloquent expression of our feelings. I believe that the deepest views of this truth, and the most intense throbbings of the divine life within us, are those which the tongue can but feebly utter. They are too sacred, vast, and glorious, to be idly and lightly spoken of.

But, beloved, we would have you know into what a land of spiritual wealth, plenty, and peace you are brought when in the least degree you are enabled to realize what Christ is to you. Do you, amid life's trials and earth's cares, consider the possessions you have in Jesus- What a Savior, what a Kinsman! what a Brother! what a Friend! what an Advocate, what a Counselor! what a loving heart loves you, what a sleepless eye watches over you, what a full hand supplies you!

Remember, too, what a God and Father God is to you; what a present help in every time of need. Realize this in your sorrows, difficulties, and perplexities, and then you will be enabled to say, "What are you, O great mountain? before my glorious Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; for my Savior, my Joseph, is at the right hand of the Father, having all authority, wealth, and power."

Nor must I fail to remind you into what a land of Goshen Christ our Brother soon will bring you, when He shall have delivered you from out of this Egypt, this iron furnace, this land of toil and bondage, service and sorrow. In a little while He will send the chariot, all laden and furnished for the journey, and with it a celestial convoy to bear your spirit home. Yes, believer, there awaits you in heaven the best inheritance- "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away." The best of our Goshen is on high. We dwell here but in its suburbs, the outskirts of glory; we wait with patience, yet with ardent longing, our full return from present exile- for our present spiritual Goshen is still in Egypt- and our abundant entrance into that glory and blessedness, the first-fruits of whose vintage, faith often gathers and presses into our cup as the pledge and token of the fulness of joy that is at God's right hand, and of the pleasures that are evermore.

Pilgrim of Zion! child of weariness and sorrow! cheer up! a few more milestones

passed, a few more stages traveled, a few more battles fought, and Jesus will say to you, "Come up here," and then you shall exchange the earthly for the heavenly Goshen. You will no longer dwell within its borders and eat of its fruit by hard labor, but shall inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world- and be at home with God.

One feature more yet awaits our study- Joseph's FILIAL LOVE: "You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near unto me. . . . And there will I nourish you." Such were the words of Joseph addressed to his aged father. What a beautiful and touching picture of filial affection and piety! Here was the least of his father's house raised up by God to be the savior of his brethren, and that father's benefactor in his old age. Let us who have parents- aged parents- learn a lesson here. Be very tender and gentle towards them. Reverence their gray hairs. It will be but a little while that the privilege and honor will be given of comforting and soothing their trembling descent to the tomb. Let your filial piety and love deepen and intensify as their sun declines. Be as patient and gentle towards the infirmities of their age, as they were towards the frivolities of your youth. Rock gently the cradle of their decrepitude, and give them the best it is in your power to bestow; and God will bless you for it when they are gathered to their fathers. Who can tell but that God has spared your life and raised you up for this special office and mission of filial piety and love!

Study these two promises in their spiritual import: "You shall be near unto me, and there will I nourish you." Beloved, the Lord Jesus intends that His brethren- His Father's house shall be near unto Him in heaven. His satisfaction of soul will not be complete until He clusters around Him in glory all for whom that soul travailed in suffering on earth. Nothing shall separate Him from His people. Not a jewel from His crown, not a lamb from the fold, shall be missing then. If you have the weakest throb of spiritual life, the faintest spark of Divine love in your soul now, Jesus, who inspired that life and kindled that love, will send for you to glory, "and so shall you be forever with the Lord."

The second promise is- "And there will I nourish you." The nourishment of heaven! oh, what is it? It is to drink of the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It is to eat of the fruit of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, yielding its fruit every month. It is to behold Christ in His glory, to enjoy God forever, to be perfected in purity, and to swim in the ocean of infinite and eternal blessedness. There Jesus will nourish you, dear saints of God; and there shall be no more exile; no more sorrow, no more neediness, no more parting, no more sickness, no more death, and no more sin. You will be luxuriating forever amid the glories and plenitude of the new Jerusalem!

"Oh yes, we shall behold the day  
When Zion's children shall return;  
Our sorrows then shall flee away,

And we shall never, never mourn."

"The hope that such a day will come  
Makes even the captive's portion sweet;  
Though now we're distant far from home,  
In glory soon we all shall meet."

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