

The Mark of the Beast

BY ELDER J. H. WAGGONER.

[The following was written in November, 1864 occasioned by an article in the *World's Crisis*, by I. C. Wellcome. It is now published in this form for the benefit of inquirers who could not otherwise obtain it.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

To the First-Day Adventists of New England	1
GOD'S ANSWERS TO MAN'S EXCUSES FOR NOT KEEPING HIS SABBATH	12
WILL YOU ALSO CAREFULLY EXAMINE THE FOLLOWING DECLARATIONS CONCERNING THE LAW OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS? .	14
TO THOSE WHO READ THIS TRACT	15

To the First-Day Adventists of New England

Wishing to make some remarks on an article in a late number of the *World's Crisis*, as that is somewhat especially a New England paper, I make my address to you.

The article is entitled, "The Mark of the Beast," and is signed, I. C. Wellcome.

The first sentence of that article is so strikingly truthful that it should secure the interest of the reader *to the whole subject*. It is this: "There is fearful judgment awaiting all who have the mark of the beast."

But does it not appear to you that Eld. Wellcome has not done the subject and his readers the justice required by these solemn truths? Have you not a right to expect that he, "a teacher in Israel," would give you some idea of who were, or who are, in danger of this fearful judgment? Is a merely negative position a safe one? Can you be satisfied with such a position on such an important subject? This is surely not the way you have been accustomed to treat Bible truths, else you had never held the name of Adventists.

Before examining the position assumed by Eld. Wellcome, let me call your attention to a few plain facts of prophecy.

2

1. There are three messages in Rev. xiv, 6-12.
2. The Son of Man comes on the white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth just after these messages are given. The great wine-press of the wrath of God is trodden at that time. See verses 14-20.

3. Some of the leading facts of the Third Message of that chapter are to be developed under the influence of Spiritualism, now extensively prevailing in the land. Chap, xiii, 11-17.

4. The first message--"the hour of his judgment is come"--was given by William Miller and others; declared by them to be "the leading advent proclamation--the main branch of our [their] specific work."

5. The second message was believed, and so fulfilled, by tens of thousands of conscientious, God-fearing Adventists in New England and elsewhere; and the power of God witnessed to the truthfulness of the cry of "Babylon is fallen."

6. By comparing the Third Message, Rev. xiv, 9-12, with chap, xvi, 1, 2, it will be seen that the seven last plagues are poured out after the Third Message is given; for the first vial is poured on those who are denounced in that message for receiving the mark of the beast; and therefore these plagues constitute "the wine of the wrath of God," "without mixture," of that message.

Please carefully examine these facts, and you must be convinced that the subject of, and warning against, the mark of the beast, are not only weighty and important, but are "*present truth*," as certainly as that our Saviour's advent is "now nigh at hand." The events immediately connected with the second advent all cluster around the message warning against this mark.

And again I ask, Can you, as Adventists, take a merely passive and negative position on that which is so manifestly present truth? Are you willing to meet your Lord in a position so well becoming a slothful or, at least, a careless, servant? But you will reply, (for I perceive this to be the opinion of some,) "Allowing it to be present truth, and the relation of facts and events

3

to be as stated, yet you Seventh-day Adventists are mistaken in some of your views; you are fanatical."

Allow me to answer, that I think your reasoning is not good; your statement does not meet the question. The disciples were mistaken in their views when Christ rode into Jerusalem; did that justify the rejection of the gospel which they preached? William Miller was mistaken in some things; did that justify the world and a world-loving church in taking a negative position on the great doctrine of the second advent? Because he did not know *every thing*, were they justified in resting contented in knowing *nothing*? Can you answer these questions to your own consciences before God, and not condemn yourselves on the subject now being considered?

Do you have that knowledge of what the mark of the beast *is*, that you may confidently judge of our errors? Does Eld. Wellcome, in his article, give you any direction how to escape this "fearful judgment?" Do any of your teachers show you how to avoid this fearful and now-impending danger? No! they do not know what it *is*; they only pretend to know in part what it *is not*. Are they not then blind in respect to this part of present truth? Dare you follow them down to the Judgment in this condition?

But having shown the fallacy of your objection, I now say that I, in all honesty and sincerity, differ with you right there. I think we are not mistaken; we are not fanatical. I believe we are able to give a *good Bible reason* for our faith on this

subject. Thus thinking, and with confidence in your willingness to examine it with candor, I ask you to note the following facts:

1. In Rom. iv, 11, circumcision is called a *sign* and a *seal*. These terms are used interchangeably--they signify the same thing.

2. In Rev. vii the servants of God are said to be *sealed* in their *foreheads*. Some translations say *signed*.

3. In Eze. ix they are said to receive a *mark* in their *foreheads*. As Ezekiel's vision is of the time when utter

4

destruction without mercy or pity is impending, and Rev. vii when the four winds are about to blow on the earth, which denotes the battle of the great day, they must refer to the same time and the same work. And thus *mark*, and *sign* or *seal*, are also shown to be synonymous.

4. The mark of the beast is enforced, in the *forehead* or in the *hand*, just before the coming of the Son of Man, as shown in Rev. xiii and xiv. But we see also that the seal or mark of God is placed in the foreheads of his servants in that same time. Therefore they stand over against one another; one *marking* those who are saved when the Lord Jesus comes; the other those who suffer the seven last plagues.

5. In the Third Angel's Message of Rev. xiv, 9-12, which warns against the mark of the beast, and which denounces such "fearful judgment" against all who receive it, the opposite or contrast is presented in "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." This furnishes us with *the only due to be found in the Bible* as to what is the mark of the beast.

6. Though this message embraces both the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, yet as the seal or mark is the sign of the living God--the Father, we naturally conclude that the sign will be found in his commandments rather than in the faith of his Son. And, indeed, the faith of Jesus is based upon these commandments, for the gospel is a remedy for sin, and sin is the transgression of the law.

7. In Ex. xxxi, 16, 17, the Lord says *his Sabbath* is his *sign*, because he made all things in six days and rested the seventh day. Now in many scriptures it is shown that the characteristic title of God is that of Creator or Maker of all things. See Jer. x, 1-16; Acts xvii, 22-25; Rev. xiv, 6, 7, etc. Wherefore it is said in Eze. xx, 20: "And hallow *my Sabbaths*; and they shall be a *sign* between me and you, *that ye may know that I am the Lord thy God*."

8. For this reason the Sabbath is the *seal of his law*;

5

Isa. viii, 16; for of that law which Jehovah spake with his own voice, and wrote with his own finger, the Sabbath or fourth commandment is the only one which proves his authority, as it alone reveals his title of Creator of all things. This shows that we do not overestimate the importance of the Sabbath; that it is a fearful matter to disregard his authority by trampling it under foot.

Now as God's Sabbath is his sign or mark, expressive of his power or authority as creator, and as the Third Angel's Message calls attention to the mark of the beast, and also to the commandments of God wherein His mark is found,

we are necessarily led to conclude that, when the mark of the beast is enforced it will stand in direct opposition to God's mark or sign; that is to say, that as God's sign, of power is his Sabbath as commemorating his creative work, the sign or mark of the beast will be an opposition or counterfeit Sabbath, resting on Papal authority, and offered as evidence of Papal power and rule.

In giving the evidence of God's sign, we have given his own words--produced only his own direct claim. In like manner we let the beast power produce his own testimony as to his sign or evidence of authority. The following from the "Douay Catechism" is both direct and decisive on this point.

"*Question.* How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

"*Answer.* By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

"Q. How prove you that?

"A. Because by keeping Sunday they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin."

This is not an exception to their general statements of

6

the evidence. The following is from another Catholic work, the "Doctrinal Catechism."

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her--she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no scriptural authority."

Here is claim of the very highest authority and power, viz., to set aside that which God has commanded, and to institute, and make a duty or a sin, that which God has not commanded nor prohibited. And of this power the Sunday-sabbath, the rival of Jehovah's Sabbath, is offered as evidence--as a *sign*.

We have now plainly before us, God, the creator, with his Sabbath as his sign or mark of power; and the beast as a rival power, "sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," with his rival or counterfeit Sabbath as the sign or mark of his power. *These are the burden of the Third Angel's Message.* Here is an important element of present truth, as the Son of Man is soon to take his place on the white cloud, to reap the harvest of the earth. Happy, the man who learns herein his duty and his danger; who obeys one and shuns the other.

I now come to notice the pretended argument of Eld. Wellcome, which is, indeed, only an objection thrown out against the plain, undeniable facts I have presented. It is in two points, viz.:

1. The beast did not come into existence earlier than three hundred years after Christ.

2. All Christians kept the first day of the week during that three hundred years before there was any beast to ordain it, or any mark for them to receive.

This he puts forth with all seeming confidence, as taking the mask off from our position! Now I think if he had examined the subject more thoroughly he would

7

have had less confidence in the effort he has put forth. I want you carefully to note the following facts:

1. The earliest first-day keepers did not profess to keep that day on any Scripture authority.

2. They did not keep it as *the Sabbath*, or as a substitute for the observance of the seventh day.

On the first point I affirm, and fear no contradiction, that no early writer ever based the observance of first-day on the authority of the Scriptures. Now Paul says to Timothy, as you have often quoted, that the Holy Scriptures *thoroughly furnish* the man of God to *all good works*. Here is our test; and by this test we denounce Sunday-keeping as not being a good work.

What if it was kept by some within the first three centuries? Will you take the practice of the churches of that age as your rule, rather than the teachings of the Scriptures? If "the mystery of iniquity," by which the Man of Sin was exalted, was already working in Paul's day, is it any marvel that "iniquity" itself was exalted soon after his day? Dare you practice sprinkling for baptism, without the warrant of Scripture, because it was practiced by "the church?" If anybody ever found a commandment in the Scriptures to keep Sunday, we can find it; all Bible readers can. On this read the following testimony and admissions.

Buck, in his "Theological Dictionary," article *Sabbath*, says:

"It must be confessed that there is no law in the New Testament concerning the first day."

Remember here that Paul says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." But in regard to keeping first-day there is no law; hence there is no duty. It is "will-worship."

Dr. Scott, in his Commentary, says:

"The change from the seventh to the first appears to have been gradually and silently introduced."

And in that manner have all other errors been introduced into the church; while for truth and duty we may safely appeal "to the law and to the testimony."

8

Neander says:

"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance."

Alex. Campbell, Pres. of Bethany College, Va., in a lecture before a theological class, said:

"Was the first day set apart by public authority in the apostolic age? No. By whom was it set apart, and when? Constantine, who lived about the beginning of the fourth century."

Challoner, D. D. Catholic, says:

"Sundays and holy days all stand upon the same foundation; viz., the ordinance of the church."

Sir Wm. Domville, England, said:

"Not any ecclesiastical writer of the first three centuries attributed the origin of Sunday observance either to Christ or to his apostles."

There is scarcely any limit to the testimony which might be produced on this point; but this is sufficient to show that first-day observance was gradually introduced, without any Scripture authority, and therefore is on a level with Easter, Good Friday, etc.; or any other dogma peculiar to the dark ages of the church.

The second fact, most immediately related to this subject, Eld. Wellcome's article did not touch, Did the early first-day keepers observe that day as the Sabbath, or as a substitute for the Sabbath of the Lord? The very fact that they did not claim any Scripture authority for their action negatives the question. Besides this there is ample proof that they did not.

J. W. Morton, in his excellent "Vindication of the True Sabbath," says:

"The first day of the week was not observed by any of the children of men as a *Sabbath* for three hundred years after the birth of Christ. Do you ask for proof? I refer you to Theodore de Beza, who plainly says so. If you are not satisfied with the witness, will you have the goodness to prove the affirmative of the proposition?"

Bishop Jeremy Taylor said:

"It was not introduced by virtue of the fourth commandment,

9

because they for almost three hundred years together kept that day which was in that commandment."

Dr. Heylyn in his "History of the Sabbath" says of early Sunday-keeping:

"For three hundred years there was neither law to bind them to it, nor any rest from labor or from worldly business required upon it."

And again he says:

"Tertullian tells us that they did devote the Sunday partly unto mirth and recreation, not to devotion altogether; when in a hundred years after Tertullian's time, there was no law or constitution to restrain men from labor on this day, in the Christian churches."

Prof. Moses Stuart said:

"More or less of seventh-day observance was practiced in nearly all the Greek and Latin churches."

Prof. Stuart also mentions the well-known fact that the Council of Laodicea anathematized those Christians who kept the seventh day. This was a. d. 350.

Now notice, that Dr. Scott says the observance of first-day was introduced *gradually*; Bishop Taylor says the day required in the commandment; the-seventh, was kept for almost three hundred years; Prof. Stuart confirms this statement of Bishop Taylor; and in 350 the Papal council anathematized those Christians who still kept the seventh day; yet in the face of these undeniable facts. Eld. Wellcome says that all Christians kept the first day of the week during the first three centuries! I leave it to your candid judgment as to who is unmasked by the facts.

But let us examine the first "law," "constitution," or "public authority," for Sunday keeping. Campbell says it was given by Constantine. Dr. Heylyn says no

such law existed for a hundred years after Tertullian's time; who died in a. d. 216. Therefore it is evident that Dr. Heylyn referred to this same law of Constantine, which was made in 321, and was as follows:

"Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation

10

of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by Heaven."

All authorities point to this as the first law for resting on first-day; but notice that this was limited to the town's people, and it was then only regarded as the venerable day of the sun--sun's day, or Sunday--not as a Christian institution, or as the Sabbath. To take this heathen festival of the sun and make a Sabbath or Christian festival of it, was an after work, accomplished by the church of Rome, or beast power. And I would invite Eld. Wellcome, or any other who pretends to take the mask off from our position, to examine this subject till he at least knows what our position is--till he discerns between a heathen festival and a church ordinance. We have evidence that the sixth and first days were early regarded as peculiar days, because of the crucifixion and the resurrection; but neither of them was regarded as the Sabbath. Constantine's decree attached no peculiarity of the Sabbath to first-day, or day of the sun; it did not affect to degrade the Sabbath and exalt the first day to its place. This was the work of the Romish Church. And this is what constitutes the Sunday a rival, or counterfeit of the Lord's Sabbath, or sign. *This is what must make it the mark of the beast.* Any other festival or canon of the Catholic Church can not be that mark or sign, because no other stands as a rival to the Lord's sign; and this rivalry or counterfeit, character did not exist till after the rise of Papacy, and only by its authority. Surely the subject is plain enough for any who wish to have any position on it.

There is one more feature of the prophecy to which I wish to call your attention. The mark of the beast is first presented in its enforcement by the two-horned beast, of Rev. xiii. Verse 12 says he "causeth *the*

11

earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." They that dwell in the earth may follow the Papal power in many respects. But how is it that the *earth itself* is caused to worship the beast? Evidently in that it must not be tilled or cultivated on the Romish festival of Sunday. In this and *this only* is the prophecy fulfilled. Let this fact be carefully noted, and duly weighed in this connection.

Now I have presented to you evidence,

That the Third Angel's Message of Rev. xiv, 9-12, is present truth;

That the special danger just before the Lord comes is in having the mark of the beast;

That the present test duty is the commandments of God, in order that God's sign or seal may be upon us;

That the sign or seal of the living God, the creator of Heaven and earth, is his Sabbath;

That the Sunday-sabbath is a creature of the Papal power, and offered by it as a sign of its power;

And that it is a counterfeit of God's sign, and is the mark or sign of the beast referred to in the Third Angels Message.

Here is a plain, direct chain of testimony, leading to a plain conclusion and solution of this important subject. You object to it. Will you be so kind as to give us a better? Will you take the same facts of Revelation, in which every Adventist who examines them must feel interested, and tell us what they mean, and to what conclusion they tend? In the fear of God we have examined this subject; with the near coming of the Lord before our eyes we have adopted our faith; and if we are wrong, pray help us. But remember that to close your eyes against the facts, the reasons, the arguments which we present, and cry "fanaticism," will never give you the truth, nor correct our errors, if we are in error.

Brethren and friends, we have given evidence of our sincerity; we have borne a heavy cross to adopt and live out our faith. We trust we are not deluded; we

12

think our Heavenly Father has smiled upon us and prospered us according to our devotion to this cause; that he has heard our prayers, and condescended to grant us his Holy Spirit. Count us not, then, as enemies, because we try to tell you the truth. "Bring forth your strong reasons;" we will examine them with care, and with candor. But until something better and more conclusive is offered (which, however, we cannot expect), we shall cling to our present faith, not only as an essential part of present truth, but as present truth itself. And I pray you to examine this subject anew; lay aside prejudice; pass it not by with indifference. And may the Lord sanctify us all through the truth, and enable us to stand when it shall be proclaimed by gathering angels, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. xiv, 12.

GOD'S ANSWERS TO MAN'S EXCUSES FOR NOT KEEPING HIS SABBATH

Excuse 1. *It is inconvenient to keep the seventh day.*

Answer. (Matt. xvi, 24.) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Chap. x, 38; Mark viii, 34; Luke ix. 23; xiv, 27.

Excuse 2. *I have a family to support; it will interfere with my business.*

Answer. (Matt. xvi, 25, 26.) "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Chap. vi, 24, 31-33; Luke xii, 15-37; 1 Tim. iv, 8; Ps. xxxvii, 3; Isa. lxx, 13, 14.

Excuse 3. *Everybody keeps the first day.*

Answer. (Matt. vii, 13, 14.) "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which

13

go in thereat: because, strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Prov. xi, 21; xvi, 5.

Excuse 4. *Many learned men teach that it is right.*

Answer. (Hos. x, 13.) "Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." 1 Cor. i, 25-27; Rev. xviii, 23.

Excuse 5. *We are unlearned, and must look to them for instruction.*

Answer. (Prov. xix, 27.) "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." 2 Tim. iii, 1-7.

Excuse 6. *The laws of our country enforce it.*

Answer. (Acts iv, 19.) "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. Chap. v, 29; Dan. iii, 16-18; vi, 10.

Excuse 7. *It causes trouble and division.*

Answer. (Luke xii, 51, 52.) "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five, in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." Verse 49; Matt. x, 34-37; John xv, 19; xvii, 14; 1 Kings xviii, 17, 18.

Excuse 8. *I should lose my influence and bring reproach.*

Answer. (Matt. v, 11, 12.) "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Luke vi, 22, 23, 26; 1 John iv, 5.

Excuse 9. *It makes no difference what day I keep, if I keep it right*

Answer. (Ex. xx, 9, 10.) "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work." Matt. xv, 3, 9. To keep any day

14

right is to keep it as God's law directs; otherwise his law is not right. To keep *every day right* is to work on the first six and rest the seventh.

Excuse 10. *I am afraid of new doctrines.*

Answer. (Ex. xx, 11.) "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Gen. 2, 3.

Excuse 11. *I do not think these old laws are binding.*

Answer. (Jer. vi, 16.) "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Chap. xviii, 15.

Excuse 12. *The apostle teaches that old things are passed away.*

Answer. (2 Cor. v, 17.) "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." The "old man" of sin must pass away. Then the man becomes new--not the law.

Ecc. xii, 13, 14. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Rev. xxii, 14. "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
"The word of the Lord endureth forever."

WILL YOU ALSO CAREFULLY EXAMINE THE FOLLOWING DECLARATIONS CONCERNING THE LAW OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

1. *God Spake the Ten Commandments in the Hearing of the People, and Wrote them with his Own Finger on two Tables of Stone.* Deut. iv, 12, 13; v, 22; Ex. xx, 1; xxiv, 12; xxxi, 18; xxxii, 15, 16; Neh. ix. 13, 14.

15

2. *A Knowledge of the Principles of the Ten Commandments Existed Before they were Given on Sinai.* (1) Gen. xxxv, 1-4; (2) Gen. xxxi, 19, 34, 35; xxxv, 2, 4; (3) Lev. xviii, 3, 21, 24, 27; (4) Gen. ii, 1-4; Mark ii, 27; Gen. viii, 10, 12; xxix, 27, 28; Ex. xvi, 4, 22, 23, 25-30; (5) Gen. ix, 20-25; (6) Gen. iv, 8-11, 23, 24; ix, 5, 6; (7) Gen. xx, 5-9; xxxviii, 24; xxxix, 7-9; (8) Gen. xxx, 33; xxxi, 19, 30, 32, 39; xlv, 8; (9) Gen. xxxix, 7-20; (10) The fact that the transgression of the tenth commandment must precede the violation of the eighth, and that the eighth was known, and its violation considered worthy of death, is sufficient evidence that the principle of the tenth commandment was known before the law was given at Sinai. Also, no mention is made of the violation of the third commandment in the book of Genesis; but profanity was among the sins of the nations living in Canaan before the law was given at Sinai. (Compare Lev. xviii, 21, with Lev. xviii, 27.) If those nations were ignorant of the matter of the third commandment, then profanity was not "an abomination" in them; for "sin is not imputed when there is no law." Rom. v, 13.

3. *The Law of God is a Complete Rule of Action.* Eccl. xii, 13; Deut, xi, 18, 19; Ps. xxxvii, 30, 31; Matt, xix, 16, 17; Rom. ii, 13; iii, 19, 20; vii, 7; Jas. i, 25; ii, 8-12; 1 John iii, 4; Rev. xxii, 14.

4. *It is Perfect.* Ps. xix, 7-9; cxix, 138, 142, 151; Isa. xlvi, 18; Rom. vii, 12, 14, 22, 25.

5. *It is Unlimited in its Duration.* Ps. cxi, 7, 8; 1 Chron. xvi, 15-17; Ps. lxxxix, 30-32; cv, 8; cxix, 144, 152, 100; Matt. v, 18.

6. *Was Ratified by the Teachings of Christ and his Apostles.* Matt. v, 17-19; xxii, 35-40; Rom. iii, 31; 1 Cor. vii, 19; Rev. xii, 17; xiv, 12; xxii, 14.

Reader, if you have carefully and prayerfully examined the above propositions, and the texts of Scripture brought to sustain them, are you not convinced of the unchangeableness of God's holy law, and that no man can stand in the Judgment without obeying it?

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