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I. AUTHORITY IN REVELATION AND MORALS. Five Fallacies and One Fiasco Convergent.

CURRENT literature, popular addresses and constantly recurring conversations in social intercourse, discover six convergent influences actively at work in society. Four are newer; two older. The aim of each is to shift the basis of authority in moral and religious life. The six forces differ widely in nature and in the character of those who direct the propagation and transmission of them through society. But, without collusion and moving along different, and sometimes antagonistic, lines, they tend to the same result, the annihilation of finality and authority in ethics and revelation. The convergence implies the superintendence of the same evil personality, shrewdly intruding himself into these different spheres of life and giving a common direction to their movements.

1. Blatant last century infidelity holds that miracles cannot be proven by testimony, and that, therefore, the claims of Christianity cannot be established because resting on them. It denies the relevancy or pertinency of what are called the evidences of Christianity, and in regard to Scripture would say: granted that a revelation has been made, it cannot be authenticated. It scoffs at religion as a superstition, and sneers at authoritative morals as the silly scruples of childhood and inexperience—greenness. Its ethics are utilitarian only. The best that it can say is, moral principles must be obeyed, because it is for the good of society. The evil of such a system was shown long ago in the famous passage about balances when held in the hands of self.—*David Hume, his confréres and followers.*

III. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

In the January number of the QUARTERLY, the Fatherhood of God occupies a leading place, being discussed, in a review, by the Rev. Dr. R. A. Webb, of publications on the subject by two Scotch divines, the Rev. Drs. Candlish and Crawford; beside a page from the same pen, among the "Criticisms and Reviews." In his leading article, the reviewer states four ways by which one may acquire the relation of a son. "A son can become such by the following methods alone: by divine creation, by generation, by regeneration, by adoption." Thus the filial relation is conceived as generic, including four several species, each different from the others, with no common characteristic of any significance, except a supposed sonship, of the precise nature or meaning of which we are left ignorant. As the point for which the reviewer contends is that Adam was, by creation, both a servant and a son, it is important that we learn what it is which, superinduced upon the creature relation, constitutes sonship. But Dr. Webb does not state it. As to sonship by adoption, it is the scriptural designation of that grace of God by which, through regeneration, the relation of sons of God is superinduced upon our natural relation to our earthly parents. As here classified, coördinate with regeneration, it is unknown to the sacred writers.

In the Scriptures, the words, father, and son, express (1), The relations which spring out of generation and birth; that is, the propagation of life from a parental source to offspring. (2), The name, father, is once used in the sense of creator. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10). Job xxxviii. 28; and Isa. lxiii. 16; and lxiv. 8, are sometimes cited as illustrating the same use of the word; but the places do not justify the reference. In the text from Job, Jehovah, in his expostulation, supposes an imagined father of the rain, as in opposition to his own creative prerogative, "Hath the rain a father?" In the places in Isaiah, neither the history of that people nor the context of the prophet will allow us to imagine that he, in putting

into the lips of Israel the cry, "Thou art our Father," meant to ignore the gracious covenant relations which God had assumed to that people, and to base their plea upon the mere ground of the creative tie. (3), "Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents and keep cattle," and Jubal "the father of such as handle the harp and organ." (Gen. iv. 20, 21). Here the word has the sense of an author or originator, and instructor. (4), It sometimes signifies a guardian and helper. Job was "a father to the poor." (Job xxix. 16). "A father of the fatherless is God." (Ps. lxviii. 5). (5), The word, son, is used to express various relations of congenial dependence. The holy angels who shouted for joy at the world's creation are called "sons of God." (Job xxxviii. 7). The disciples of the prophets were "sons of the prophets." The enemies of Christ were seed of the serpent, children of the devil. (6), In a more general sense, the inhabitants of the east are "sons of the east." "A son of beating" was one deserving stripes. Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night and perished in a night, was "a son of a night." Barnabas was "a son of consolation," while James and John were "sons of thunder."

In this enumeration, evidently the first is the primary, literal and proper meaning of the word, father; the others all being metaphorical appropriations of it; each having reference, immediate or remote, to some one or more partial characteristics of the relations between a real father and his offspring. It would seem, moreover, unquestionable, that *futherhood* is expressive of the whole contents of the word, father, and that it belongs to the primary meaning of the word; and if applied in any other way without explanation, it must result in confusion and misconception.

The positions which Dr. Webb aims to establish, and to which his statement of four modes of sonship is auxiliary, are two: First, That Adam was created at once a servant and a son of God; seccond, That "the fatherhood of God was completely disrupted by the fall, and vacated of its contents to man, except wrath and indignation, which were emptied upon him without stint." (Surely these are not contents of fatherhood). Again, he says, "While God still has a Father's heart, he is a Father only toward his own children; and he emphasizes the fact that the non-elect are not his children, but children of the devil."

While we have failed to discover the precise sense in which Dr. Webb uses the words "fatherhood," and "son of God" in this relation, it is enough for the present purpose that they are not designed as having reference to that divine beneficence which is shared by all unfallen intelligences, and which graciously presides over our fallen race and its destinies. It is something special to Adam, something which superinduced the relation of a son upon that of a servant; something the result of a peculiar paternal love toward him. For, says Dr. Webb, "the argument cannot proceed directly from the existence of love in the divine bosom to the relation of God as Father. The nature of the love must first be determined as parental."

Two questions here present themselves. (1), Do the Scriptures which are appealed to in behalf of the first proposition prove it true? (2), What is its bearing on the doctrine of that grace whereby God's people, born of him, become his very children?

After Professor Crawford, Dr. Webb cites three Scriptures, on which he relies to sustain his first position. They are Luke iii. 28-38; Acts xvii. 28; Luke xv. 11-32. The first of these is the genealogy of the Lord Jesus, as given by Luke, which, in our common version, closes with "Adam which was the son of God," Here neither the version of King James nor the Revised version is strictly true to the original, which literally reads, "Jesus being as was supposed the son of Joseph, of Heli, (or 'from Heli,' such is the force of the Greek genitive), from Matthat, . . . from Adam, from God." There is not a syllable in the original to correspond with the clause, "which was the son." The one only word inserted between the successive names in the original is the definite article, which, according to the idiom of the Greek, indicates the names to have been of public knowledge. As though it were written "the Heli of the genealogies." Dr. Candlish objects to inserting "the son." The words, he says, "have no right to be in the genealogy at all." In fact, they are not in the inspired record. Our reviewer replies to the Scotch divine, "As the words, 'which was of,' are applied to tell the relation between Adam and Seth,

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what else can they mean than 'son of'? And the phrase necessarily has this meaning throughout the genealogical table. Why change its meaning when you get back to Adam? Was it impossible for him to have been the son of God by creation?" "The same relation which Seth sustained to Adam, Adam sustained to God, if the genealogical record is to bear its face meaning. If, therefore, it can be affirmed in any proper sense that Adam was the father of Seth, it may be affirmed in the very same sense that God was the father of Adam."

Respecting the scripture in question, there are several things to be taken into account which are entirely ignored by our reviewer.

1. Matthew asserts in terms which admit of but one meaning that "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary." Joseph, therefore, was not the son of Heli; but, if we may accept a statement from the Talmud, which is probable in itself, Mary was the daughter of Heli, so that Joseph was Heli's son-in-law. There are, indeed, those who assert the genealogies both to be of Joseph and not of Mary, the latter of whom they say was "probably" the daughter of Jacob, who is by Matthew described as having begotten Joseph the husband of Mary. The fatal alternative upon this theory is that Joseph and Mary were brother and sister, unless the express testimony of Matthew as to Joseph's birth is to be rejected in favor of this "probable" guess as to Mary; or, that we have no genealogy of Jesus Christ "after the flesh," at all. With this fact connect another-that Luke, in the very outset of his enumeration, emphasize the distinction between a real son by generation and birth, and one who merely by technical and legal right held the place of a son in the tables of genealogy. "Jesus being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph." He would seem thus to intimate that the real is the only proper sense in which he would use the word in that connection. He did not, because he could not, therefore, truly or consistently call Joseph the son of Heli; and thus, the first link as to that relation being broken, the whole chain was disconnected. As through Joseph, the enumeration is the order of succession and not of blood; and the final link, "Adam, which was of God," no more requires the interpolation of the term of relation, "the son," than does the first, "Joseph [the son] of Heli," whose son he was not—no more than the paramount relation of God as Adam's creator requires us to recognize Adam in the same relation to Seth, as being his creator.

2. The genealogy as given by Matthew is "of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Mat. i. 1.) It will hardly be questioned that it is of Jesus that the sonship is postulated in both these cases. *He* was the son of David; *He* the son of Abraham. So, in that of Luke, the structure of the original seems to justify the conclusion that it is not the relation of the successive persons to each other, but their common relation to our Lord, which was had in view by the evangelist; and if we are to allow the insertion of the word son, it is Jesus who in every case is the son spoken of. "Jesus the son of Heli. . . Jesus the son of God." Certainly it was not the relation of *Adam* to God that occupied the mind of the sacred writer in making this record.

3. The assertion that "if it can be affirmed in any proper sense that Adam was the father of Seth, it may be affirmed, in the very same sense, that God was the father of Adam," certainly needs explanation. I do not find that Adam is anywhere in the Scriptures called the father of Seth. The sense, the only and allsufficient sense, in which we so speak of him is, that Seth was begotten of him, the fruit of his body. Was God the father of Adam "in the very same sense?"

The next Scripture to which the reviewer appeals is Paul's quotation from the Greek poet, Aratus, "We are his offspring." (Acts xvii. 28.) The Doctor interprets Paul's argument from this place thus: "In him we live and move, and have our being. He is our Father as well as our creator; and we are his offspring. Inasmuch as he is our Father, it is a shame to liken him to images of gold, silver and stone. Therefore, your idolatry is wrong, because it is a degradation of him who is confessedly your own Father." He adds, "The whole argument hinges on the paternity of God." Again: "This quotation meant to the men of Athens, We are the offspring of Jupiter; to Paul, We are the offspring of God. The two propositions are substantially different, and the argumentum ad hominem is inapplicable." If this be so—if to the men of Athens the quotation meant, "We are the offspring of Jupiter,"

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how is it that our reviewer himself makes Paul tell them that God " is confessedly your own Father ?" In fact, however gross the conceptions of the populace of Athens as to their many gods, it is well known that many of the more intelligent and better instructed ---such as would constitute the assembly on Mars' Hill--recognized a spiritual Zeus, the supreme author of all things; and such was no doubt the meaning of Aratus in the place quoted. After the full explanation already made by Paul in his discourse, he could but be understood in this higher sense by the Areopagite assembly. His argument, contrasting this conception of God as the infinite Creator of all with the idols of Athens, was altogether adequate to his purpose and intelligible to his audience. It needed no importation into the poet's thought of the idea of God's gracious fatherhood, which was foreign to Greek conceptions, and would not have been understood by his audience. Compare the words of Seneca. "Inevitable necessity bears on all things, human and divine. He himself, the Founder and Ruler of all, (Ille, ipse, omnium conditor ac rector), dictated indeed the fates, but complies with them. Forever he obeys. Once, only, he decreed."-Senecce De Provid. v.

Other points are open to remark. But one remains which is conclusive of the question on hand. If the second of Dr. Webb's fundamental propositions is true, if "the fatherhood of God was disrupted by the fall," if "he is a Father only to his children," and "the non-elect are not his children," it was impossible that Paul could have "hinged his whole argument upon the paternity of God." He could not have said, "Idolatry is a degradation of him who is confessedly your own Father." God was not the Father of Paul's skeptical audience. The only interpretation consistent with the record is that which understands the language quoted by the apostle in the sense of the pagan poet, expressing the relation of Zeus, the supreme, as the creative author of all things; with no conception of the scriptural ideas of divine tenderness and fatherhood.

The only other scripture to which Dr. Webb refers is the parable of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 11-32). He quotes with approval from Professor Crawford as follows: "It seems to me impossible to put any fair or just interpretation on this parable without assuming that general paternity which God as our creator and preserver may be held to sustain toward all men as his intelligent creatures, and recognizing the subsistence of this relation as at once a most serious aggravation of their sins, and a most powerful motive to urge them to repentance." Without entering upon the exegetical questions which here arise, it is enough to point to the fact that "the general paternity," which is here attributed to God "as our Creator and Preserver," must be something altogether different from that which, according to Dr. Webb, was exercised toward Adam in his creation, and which "was disrupted by the fall." The parable cannot, therefore, avail to sustain the position of our divine with reference to the relations between God and Adam in his state of original innocence.

We have now examined each of the Scriptures which are relied on to establish the doctrine of the reviewer. Are we not justified in the conviction that they are wholly insufficient for that purpose?

A remarkable paragraph from the same pen, which occurs in another part of the QUARTERLY (page 127) here arrests attention. In a brief notice of Black's Fatherhood of God, Dr. Webb writes thus, "Our author postulates the fatherhood of God as ' the genetic principle ' of theology, 'the principle which interprets and adjusts all the facts of the science.' The fall of man, the punishment of sin, the partial salvation of the race,-can a theology with this central principle construe such facts as these? If the fall occurred under a fatherly government, it is a mere calamity, to be pitied and not punished. Are all inflictions but fatherly chastisements? It is a strange father, who can forgive some of his children and not all, where all are alike disobedient." So writes our reviewer, respecting Dr. Black's opinions. But how are the sentiments thus asserted and implied to be harmonized with those which we have just examined? If the former are correct, the fall did not occur "under a fatherly government." If so, Adam was not by creation a son of God.

Several things which suggest remark have been passed by. The question remains, What bearing do the views here examined have on the gospel doctrine of the new birth? It is this which has inspired the present writing, accomplished during intervals of alleviation of a prostrating disease of three months' standing.

Dr. Webb's fourth argument is thus stated: "In the regeneration, we are 'renewed in the whole man after the image of God.' The qualities which are renewed are those that were lost, 'knowledge, righteousness and true holiness.' (Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24.) It is universally conceded that in regeneration we become the sons of God; but the qualities which are communicated in regeneration, and expanded in sanctification, are 'knowledge, righteousness and true holiness,' or the elements which go to make up the image of God. But Adam was created in the image of God and so possessed these three constituents. Now it is difficult to see why the re-creation of man in the image of God constitutes him a son, while the first creation of him in the very same image constituted him only the servant of God. Why does the restoration, in the regeneration of the Spirit, of the lost qualities of knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, evince the regenerate to be sons of God, when the very same qualities given in the first creation of Adam, proved only a servile relation? We cannot answer."

It may savor of arrogance for any one to undertake to solve the difficulties thus arrayed, in view of the closing avowal of the writer. But believing that the Scriptures afford abundant light on the subject, I will make the attempt. (1), In no case does the likeness between parent and child, nor the attributes or qualities which constitute the likeness, cause the filial relation, but the reverse. Seth was not the son of Adam because like him, but he was like him, because Adam begat Seth "in his own likeness, after his image." (2), Specifically, the moral attributes of knowledge, righteousness and holiness are not the cause of believers being the children of God; but the fact that they are born of God. The reasoning, therefore, which, from their case, as a premise, draws the conclusion that the same attributes in Adam made him a son of God, is evidently unsound, and is just as legitimate with reference to all unfallen angels, each of whom is robed in the same "knowledge, righteousness and true holiness." And yet, "are they not all ministering spirits?"-servants, and not sons. (3), The statement quoted is characterized by a radical and perplexing defect, which, in fact, runs through and vitiates the whole argument of the review. It springs out of the original recognition of four ways of becoming a son. The result is, that while the words, "regeneration" and "regenerate" occur repeatedly in the above statement, and the word "relation" is freely used throughout the article, the *idea* of that real, peculiar and intimate relation of sonship, which is the necessary product of generation and birth, and can no otherwise exist, is eliminated from the conception. Instead of real relations, nothing but attitudes and qualities remain, to which the terms of fatherhood and sonship are applied. Hence the attempt to reason from the sonship of the renewed, who are begotten and born of God, to the case of the creature Adam. Hence the assertion that "it is difficult to see why the re-creation of man in the image of God constitutes him a son, while the first creation of him in the very same image constituted him only the servant of God."

To solve the problem thus stated, we must inquire first as to the characteristics attributed in the Scriptures to Adam in innocency, and compare the result with the inspired testimonies concerning God's regenerate people.

1. Adam was a *creature*—a product of the creative will and power of God—in this respect undistinguished from all the other crea tures, except that he was honored with a special council and decree for his creation.

2. He was endowed with knowledge, righteousness and holiness, after the likeness of his Maker.

3. He was crowned with a royal liberty of will, as to continuing in the righteousness in which he was created, and was, therefore, not in the enjoyment of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. If this point be questioned, the proof is, that the Bible is silent on the subject; on which, respecting a point so important, it could not have failed to speak had such an endowment been given; and that the possibility of the fall is irreconcilable with the supposition of the indwelling of the Spirit.

As concerning Adam, the above are, we believe, the only points pertinent to the present question of which we have information in the Scriptures. Respecting God's people recovered from the fall, the testimonies are equally clear.

1. Very signal emphasis is laid on the fact that they are begotten and born of God. (John i. 17; iii. 3, etc., etc.) It will be objected that as in the case of Adam, so regeneration is expressly declared to be a new creation. (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. ii. 10; iv. 24.) True, with reference to the transformed character of the man, and of his relations to the world around him, he is called "a new creature," " creation in Christ Jesus unto good works," to whom "old things have passed away, and all things become new." But when the nature of the change itself is spoken of, it is invariably and emphatically described as a birth. "Ye must be born again." " As many as received him, to them gave he the prerogative of becoming the sons of God, . . . which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John iii. 3; i. 17.) Not only is the nature of the change thus described, but upon the essential nature of this birth are predicated the assured sanctification and salvation of the believer, and the riches of glory of his inheritance, as we shall presently see.

Concerning the nature of generation and birth, it is to be considered that the first and normal example in the Scriptures is of the only begotten Son of God. Writing in absence from my library, I avail myself of a casual citation from an old Scotch divine for a definition on this subject. In human generation, "there is a communication of the essence of the begetter to him that is begotten, whereby he that is begotten partakes of the same nature with him that begets. So here, in this eternal and ineffable generation, the Father communicates to the Son the same divine essence which he himself hath; so that the Son is of the same nature or essence with the Father. And as among men the son bears some likeness or similitude of the father, so here the eternal Son is the Father's express and perfect image and similitude, even 'the express image of his person.' (Heb. i. 3.)"—Wishart's Theologia, Edinburgh, 1716, p. 754.

Among the creatures, generation is the communication of life from the parent to the offspring, not by the exercise of a creative will on the part of the former, but by a *propagation* of the parental life to the offspring. It is illustrated in the whole vegetable world, from its lowest to its highest forms. It characterizes the entire animal kingdom, and culminates in man, in whom the added moral element signalizes the intimacy and identity of the tie between parents and children, all fallen and ruined in the fall of the father of all. God *made* Adam in his own holy image. But fallen Adam "*begat* a son in his own likeness, after his image and called his name Seth." (Gen. v. 3.)

The significance of the relation between the eternal generation in the Godhead and these creature generations will be seen, if we reflect that, but for the illustrations presented in the latter, we would have no means of forming the most remote conception of the nature of the former; and that the Spirit of inspiration uniformly uses them as the means of imparting all the knowledge which we possess concerning that inner mystery of the adorable Godhead. We may hence, without hesitation, conclude that the illustration thus found is not accidental,-that man was constituted as he is for the express purpose of illustrating the divine mystery in question; and that this was one of the features of the image and likeness of God which was impressed on Adam in his creation. It is, of course, the fact that the parallels between these two are but distant analogies. But, on the other hand, that those analogies are real, and convey to us just and true conceptions, though limited, of the divine realities, follows from the use made of them by the Spirit of inspiration; unless we are to suppose ourselves mocked by a semblance of revelation which only misleads. As the eternal generation is the connective of an ineffable nearness, unity and love, and of a community of likeness and of Godhead, between those blessed Persons, so the natural generation of the human race, the propagation and derivation of life from parent to child, is the bond and spring, even in our fallen state-how much more, had man remained unfallen-of a sweetness, tenderness and identity of affections and of interests, between parent and child, the necessary result of a realized oneness of nature, life and blood.

Intermediate between those already spoken of, is that generation by which believers become children of God,—that, the necessity of which our Saviour asserts in such emphatic terms. Respecting it the following points are revealed and signally characteristic:

1. Of it the Holy Spirit is the seed. "Ye must be born again; born of the Spirit." (John iii. 3, 5, 6.) He is "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," who dwells in God's people. (Rom. viii. 2, 9, 11.) "Whosever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) "Born again, not ($\hat{\epsilon}z$) of corruptible seed, but ($\hat{\epsilon}z$) of incorruptible; ($\partial \epsilon d$) by means of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever." The prepositions here discriminate between the efficient cause of grace, the incorruptible seed, the Holy Spirit, and the Word, the instrumental means.

2. Thus life, the life of God, is transfused into the dead soul. "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" dwells in us, imparting divine life, so that Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) God sent his Son into the world "that we might live through him." (1 John iv. 9.) The language of these and similar statements is brief and simple. Yet how profound the significance! How amazing the grace! Born of *God*. "Made partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.) Indissolubly united to the blessed Godhead by the indwelling in us of the very Spirit of God, and that as a principle of divine life, a bond of union and channel of fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ! (1 John i. 3.) Where is the creature in the universe of such exalted rank that he may dream of aspiring to the dignity and privilege of the redeemed, enjoyed by virtue of being begotten of God ?

3. All the blessings of grace and glory with which believers are endowed spring out of and are inseparably dependent on this divine birth. At the ascension of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit in all his fulness as the agent of grace, was given to him by the Father. (Acts i. 4, 5; ii. 33; John iii. 34.) That Spirit remaining in Christ as his Spirit is by him, in regeneration, shed upon and enters into God's people as the Spirit of life. Thus, "as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, . . . and have been all made to drink one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) Thus our regeneration unites us to the Lord Jesus, as "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.) Hence, to the sonship of regeneration is added part in the closer filial relation of the only begotten Son. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," who is "the first born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 17, 29.) Thus, upon the regeneration, by which we are born of God, are suspended all the riches of the glory of the eternal inheritance. "Brethren, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) Blessed be God!

Other points present themselves. But these are sufficient. And now we return to the question propounded by the reviewer, "Why the re-creation of man in the image of God constitutes him a son, while the first creation of him in the very same image constituted him only the servant of God." Answer.—1, Because the re-creation is much more than a creation. It is, literally and in the profoundest sense, a birth, whereby the life of God is derived to the dead soul of man, and the child of grace is united to the very persons of the Godhead, by a most intimate and indissoluble union. 2, Because the image of God into which the heirs of grace are born unspeakably transcends that in which Adam was created.

On the general subject, our conclusion is, that the phrase, "Fatherhood of God" is properly used in two relations only. In a metaphorical sense, it means that general divine beneficence which comprehended the holy angels in common with Adam in his original estate, and which now graciously presides over the whole human race. Literally and in its proper meaning, it belongs exclusively to the relation which the eternal Father sustains to his eternal Son, and which, through regeneration of the Spirit, and by consequent union with Christ, believers share with him.

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