

## “Seven Baskets FULL”

By Emily Byquist, C.S.

The title of today’s talk is “Seven Baskets FULL,” based on a healing account from the gospel of Mark.

“In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.”

This story is *our* story, because *we too* are the disciples.

The disciples stayed close to the Master, and walked the walk. They were right beside him when first he gave gratitude for what appeared to them as meager supply. It was to them whom Jesus turned and asked to distribute the food and feed the hungry -- those, who had been following his teachings for three days. And then, *after* feeding the 4,000 it was the disciples who gathered up the remaining fragments. And while the multitude were on their way home, the disciples alone saw, at the end of the day, and in obedience to the divine command, that they had gathered their baskets to full. Is this act of compassion and amazing healing something relegated to the past, losing its grasp in the present as possible?

Or, is the question, really: What is the *order of Science* that enabled Jesus to *heal* -- so *absolutely, consistently* and *instantaneously*? That is as present now as throughout all eternity?

What is the *method of Science* that makes it all possible?

When we go into our gardens, we plant and tenderly water the seed; we watch its growth, making sure it gets enough water and sunlight, and wait to see its bloom.

Yet, in her poem, “Feed My Sheep,” Mary Baker Eddy *gives us* a very different and particular *order of Science*. Asking our Shepherd, in utter humility, she gives us the *key* to feeding Thy sheep, as Jesus fed the hungering multitude.

She says, "How to gather, how to sow, How to feed Thy sheep." Note the chronology here. How to "gather," how to "sow." Don't we sow and *then* gather? Who ever heard of gathering and then sowing?

Is not this the key? *She reversed the process* because, in the order of Divinity -- as in Christian Science treatment -- we begin with what already exists in Truth, what is already true. We don't work up to it, but out from it. Otherwise, how could we begin with gratitude? *How could we be grateful for what does not exist?*

Jesus always gave gratitude *first* in *Scientific order* and *prayer*, not *after*, for he gave gratitude for what already exists. Is not this Christian Science?

This spiritual fact replaces *material reasoning, process, and time*. In the order of Science, like Jesus, we give gratitude. We then gather, gather the right idea. Then we sow -- plant with deep roots of understanding. And we listen. Through obedience in life and action, we find the truth -- full and overflowing -- that meets every human need and feeds the hungry multitude.

And so, it is with us. As *we* stay close to the teachings, gather by living the truth in *life practice*, sow the good seed of Truth learned through *experience*, and listening for the Father's voice -- like the disciples, we too find in our lives the overflowing healing currents of Truth. Our baskets are *FULL*.

So, how do we do this? How do we *first* Gather and *then* Sow? In the Glossary of *Science and Health\_with Key to the Scriptures*, part of the definition of "Miracle" states: "that which is divinely natural, but must be learned humanly." So, we ask ourselves, how do we learn this humanly? How do we walk the walk and live Christianity -- spiritual understanding, and fruition? The miracle of Christianity is its science. And the miracle of science is Christianity. Through compassionate and generous living, listening to the Father and obedience to follow; the humility to leave selfish pride, to practice un-selfed love, *and* the willingness to share the feast -- constitute the work.

As we look deeply into the teachings and live the full-orbed aspects of scientific Christianity -- live out from them -- we garner the blessing, and the multitude is fed.

We learn the Principle in life experience, distribute its fullness, and gather our baskets fully complete. Full of what? Of the kingdom of heaven right here, right now.

In *Unity of Good*, Mary Baker Eddy writes: "Jesus required neither cycles of time nor thought in order to mature fitness for perfection and its possibilities. He said that the kingdom of heaven is here, and is included in Mind; that while ye say, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh the harvest, I say, look up, not down, for your fields are already white for the harvest; and gather the harvest by mental, not material processes."

In this walk of reaping and sowing there is no wandering. This is no Hansel and Gretel walk, looking for clues to find our way home, to heaven. In this walk, where the Shepherd guides us, there are no empty baskets, no scattered crumbs of life and its *promise* of fulfillment, no postponed healing -- just the ever present fullness of Life. Our baskets are full and complete -- understanding and fulfillment. Like the disciples, we, too, are following the Shepherd's direction, finding the seven baskets of God's allness, the fullness of ever-present perfection -- *realized, understood, fulfilled*.

Jesus could not have fed the multitudes with crumbs of human reasoning, broken promises, nor waiting dreams. No unrealized hope, nor leaning on outworn theology of a future redemption. No postponed and delayed healing. We gather from the ever-present fullness and fulfillment of Life, full and complete, and the kingdom of heaven in man, intact. Seven baskets, FULL.

And here we are today, companioning with the teachings, to go out and participate in life practice. Walking the walk of Spirit's fullness, our baskets are full and complete -- now. This is Our story -- the ever-present reality of our being.

Does anyone know what the number seven represents in the Bible?

*The Companion Bible* states: "The number seven denotes spiritual perfection. It is the number, or hall-mark of the Holy Spirit's work, where God is the Author and Giver of life." And we find the number seven throughout Scripture in line with this, as seven corresponds to completeness, fullness of creation, as in the seven synonyms for God in our textbook, the seven days of creation...and as in *Miscellaneous Writings* where our Leader writes: "the seventh is the day of rest, when it is found that evil is naught and good is all"-- seven baskets, garnered and full...spiritual perfection realized. Like the disciples, we too are staying to work, feed and gather -- to find the seven baskets of God's allness, ever present perfection, *realized, understood, fulfilled*. We are here to gather, sow, and to feed Thy sheep.

After reading the story in Mark of Jesus feeding the multitude, I closed my Bible, and decided to go for a walk. It was quite early that morning, the sun was rising and there was no one around -- just the sun's rays glistening and a large quiet sky above. I went to one of my favorite places to walk in a nearby park. A trail circles a very large pond, which hills upward toward the St. Louis Art Museum, sitting majestically in the distance. And there I saw the most tender illustration of God's mothering and how we learn. At this early hour I was surprised to find a family boating. The Dad was pushing the pedals of the paddleboat, and the Mom was in the back with their small children. The children were leaning over the back of the boat, giggling as they were feeding the ducks, which

were following closely and having a delicious breakfast! It was also a family, a Mama duck with her seven babies. Yes, seven babies. What I noticed was how the baby *ducks* were learning. She was close behind them, watching every move. But as they were hungry and grappling for the food, she didn't do it for them. While guiding them, she loved them enough to let them learn on their own. Isn't this what we are all doing? *Does not this parallel how we learn?* Are we not, as disciples, learning from experience to walk the walk? Does not Mrs. Eddy say in *Science and Health* and in referring to herself, that regardless of what another says or thinks on a subject, she speaks from experience? As we stay close to the teachings, and live them, through obedience, humility, unselfed love, as we practice, and distribute we gather -- we find that *we* speak from experience, too.

Daisette McKenzie writes in her recollection of Mary Baker Eddy: "Christian Science is not something apart from this world, although it is apart from worldliness. It is the way to live. The disciples were not called Christians for many years. The teachings of Jesus were simply "the way." This characterization might well be applied to Christian Science in its profound simplicity. It is the way to live. Christian Scientists are not trying to draw converts out of the world to add one more to the sects already in existence. They seek to permeate the human mind with the true way to live, which restores the healing of early Christianity."

Let's walk the walk together today and explore various ways in which our baskets are complete and full...to be grateful, to gather, to sow...the specific ways laid out for us by Jesus and Mrs. Eddy... learning from life experience in some such areas as: children, politics, healing, church, and sharing the truth.

***"THE WORLD HAS NEED OF YOU..."*** writes Mary Baker Eddy in *Miscellaneous Writings*.

When we think of that, what thoughts come to mind? It needs contribution, prominence, worldly stature, and success? Actually, she begins that sentence with two words: "*Beloved children*" -- it reads in full: "Beloved children, the world has need of you..." And she continues..."and more as children than as men and women..." Then, she tells us how it needs us... "it needs your *innocence, unselfishness, faithful affection, uncontaminated lives.*" She continues: "*You need also to watch, and pray that you preserve these virtues unstained, and lose them not through contact with the world. What grander ambition is there than to maintain in yourselves what Jesus loved, and to know that your example, more than words, makes morals for mankind!*" "Beloved children..." "maintain in yourselves what Jesus loved." Have you ever noticed, how children never ask you who you voted for? Or, what school you went to! Or how much money you make? Nor hold grudges...they are so easy to love, because, they love. "*Innocence, unselfishness, faithful affection, uncontaminated lives...*"

For the past three years I have served as a camp practitioner for part of the summer at a Christian Science camp. I would like to share some healings that took place during these summers. I had barely arrived when the phone rang asking for my immediate help. A young boy had been quarantined because of what was considered a contagious skin condition. At this point, it had traveled to most of his body, which was bandaged. The dear camp nurse was tenderly taking care of this young man, and handling the situation with the utmost care and spiritual acumen. And what a privilege it was to work closely with Christian Science nurses during my three years at camp. It was a Sunday morning, and I was asked if I would teach him since he could not attend the camp Sunday School. Moments later, this lad appeared at my cottage, ready! We sat down and began to talk, and during the conversation it was revealed what needed to be handled. He had been believing -- as had been told him -- that his pet lizard carried an infectious disease and if hands were not properly washed *after* handling him, he could become infected. And there we were. At that precious moment, we spoke together about God's creation being completely benevolent and that one idea cannot possibly harm another idea, but only bless. It became so clear, so true to both of us, that at the end of Sunday School, he went bounding off, as only a young lad can do! And that was the turning point. That was the healing. We met every day to talk. Within a week, all bandages were off.

One day during this time, I was in the cottage with him, and he was showing me his cello. Asking me if I would like to hear him play, I was delighted. As he began to play, I could see, in the distance, his mother, who works at the camp, and his father, talking. And all of a sudden they stopped, stood still, and simultaneously, looked toward the cottage where we were. I went out to them, making sure everything was all right. They were in awe. Their child had resisted playing this instrument for all the years he was studying! And to hear him want to play and play a piece completely took them off guard. This illustrated to me how beautiful and complete the touch of the Christ is in Christian Science healing. The music was like the icing on the cake. The healing had also removed the resistance to do the right thing.

The other healing I call 'Mountain Man.' This is a highly competitive race to a mountain top, and is something the boys *really* look forward to. It was after breakfast, and a young man came up to me. Staggering, and dragging himself, he asked me if I would pray for him. *Of course.* I asked him, though, to pray as well. He looked at me and said, "I can't. I have to do Mountain Man!" He then said he had the perfect solution. I pray while he goes about having fun! I looked at him and said, "*I have no magic wand! Christian Science works when we work. So, let's get to work!*" And I must say, that was the quickest healing, because this young man was simply not going to miss Mountain Man! Now, I am not telling this story so that we have human events as an incentive, but it was a great lesson to me on how children do not tolerate *time, delay, and inaction.*

They live in the NOW and healings at camp are very often swift, because children -- or the child thought -- simply sees the Truth as true, NOW. We can all do with a bit more of this, can't we? This in no way diminishes the patience and healing and consistent working out of things. But it does indicate the immediacy of Truth, ever available, and the *naturalness* of it --along with children's easy acceptance of Truth. Christian Science is fully capable of this, and, as children are unwilling to accept the sequence of time, so, we can see how innocence, the willingness to work, the mental insistence to be in the NOW...purity...willingness to give up the old for the new...no pride nor clinging to outworn or personal opinions constitute the child thought, which Jesus loved.

This leads right into the next topic -- politics. *A sharp contrast to the definition of children is the definition of Pharisee in the Glossary of Science and Health. Mrs. Eddy defines it:*

“Pharisee. Corporeal and sensuous belief; self-righteousness; vanity; hypocrisy.”

I have noticed in the practice of Christian Science -- in regard to our lives and our global world -- that at times, we might see others that we think do not perceive the world situation, are asleep or just want to see only the good going on. Then, there are others, who perceive the wrong, but *stay* there with it, *ruminate* over it, *rehearse* it, and *obsess* over it. Here's the point. What is the difference between competing political viewpoints if we stay in the '*in between*' -- that place of human knowledge and rumination?

If we do not prayerfully work to take such rumination to its nothingness, there is no healing. We might sound smart, loving, overwhelmed, opinionated, distraught, and self-righteous. Like the Pharisees of old, we can gloat in our self-righteousness, proud that we are not as other men are and revel in the vanity of a special perception of a human situation, but there is no healing. And *our* story is one of healing. As is said in “Feed My Sheep,” in the deepest humility “make self-righteousness be still, break earth's stupid rest...”

Now, none of us would sign up to be a Pharisee! But the Phariseeism of our rightness needs to be healed.

Now, that is our story.

*And it must be done!* because we can't fill our baskets with Pharisical notions, and heal. We really have no choice. And where do we go to do this? In humility and prayer. Think of these qualities of thought: love, orderliness, promptness, alertness, accuracy, truthfulness, fidelity, consecration, and humility. These qualities are from Calvin Hill's reminiscence of what he listed as Mrs. Eddy's requirement in her household helpers. As we live them, where is there possible room for Phariseeism in our baskets?

I am going to read something -- think about where it is from, and when it was published. It is titled "The Present Need."

"More Christian Scientists are not so much needed at present as better ones. There is danger of forgetting that progressively higher demonstration is the only way to help establish true Christianity.

"It is comparatively easy to win converts to almost anything, but the numerical strength of its adherents is no proof of the truth of a doctrine. If numbers could prove anything, the Mahometans might properly challenge Christians to a comparison of evidence.

"Christian Science is pre-eminently science. It rests upon demonstration and nothing else can sustain its infinite claims. It makes bold declaration that all the accumulated lore of material medica is worthless compared with the healing power of divine Love, as taught by Jesus, and that God is able to do all things. More than a million cases of healing constitute the evidence that Christian Science does heal the sick, and this evidence is rapidly accumulating. As the workers draw closer to God and deny self, the healing will be done as promptly as it was by the Master, and this is the right way to make converts.

"The present need is for men and women who are above all puny ambition to extend their personal influence, and cannot be lulled to sleep by the praises of the foolish; for men and women who will not set limits for themselves in doing good, for men and women who are capable of a broad view of the work to be done and who have a determined willingness to do it.

"In Christian Science the warfare against evil is not like that of the world, where army fights army almost automatically. Ours is a hand-to-hand conflict, and each soldier must be a David, able to stand alone and fight.

When we look at the wickedness of the world it seems so impossible to redeem it that we are tempted to be discouraged. We need not worry about saving the world – the way to redeem it is to redeem ourselves. So much goodness and purity as we have will exert a wonderful transforming power on the world."

This is from the July 13, 1899 *Christian Science Sentinel* – things don't change much!

A High School Senior did a project on the four Gospels. And I love something that was recognized about the book of John. She wrote: "I thought it was interesting how, in the gospel of John, he had compassion on Jesus' fellow disciples, and speaks of them in an optimistic and positive way. Not necessarily saying they knew and understood everything that Jesus said and did, but that they at least believed on him in following his works. I loved reading the part about loving one another and washing each other's feet and to form friendships and relationships in which our job is to *enlarge, purify, and strengthen* each other."

In the *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy* series, Martha Wilcox recalls a talk she had with Mrs. Eddy. At one point, she says: “In her personal instruction she gave nothing to me but what she has given in her writings to all students of Christian Science. But what so impressed her instructions upon my mind was that she required of me immediate application and demonstration of what she taught. Without this required application and demonstration, Mrs. Eddy knew that the instructions she gave would be of little value to me.”

Which brings us to **CHURCH**.

Robert Peel has insightful perspectives on events that happened at the turn of the twentieth century, which are just as relevant today. In an article of his that appeared in a small book titled, *Understanding Our Century*, he says, in part:

“On the eve of the twentieth century, nine years before she launched *The Christian Science Monitor*, Mary Baker Eddy wrote to the church she had founded in Boston: ‘I reluctantly foresee great danger threatening our nation, -- imperialism, monopoly, and a lax system of religion.’ Later she added several other issues including “industrial slavery” and “insufficient freedom of honest competition” to the roster of challenges.

“In another message to her church in 1902 she commented on the fact that within the past decade religion in the United States had passed “from stern Protestantism to doubtful liberalism,” and the two phrases suggest the end of an epoch of religious certitude. For one thing, Darwinism had shaken the foundations of evangelical faith and biblical literalism more seriously than the whole age of reason had been able to do. By the end of the nineteenth century, traditional Christianity was clearly in retreat before the increasing claims of a basically materialist science.

“Religion as a whole did very little to challenge this development. One notable exception was the Social Gospel.

“For all its admirable humanitarian zeal, the Social Gospel illustrated the secularizing tendency that Mrs. Eddy felt was turning the “stern Protestantism” of the Puritan past she had known into ‘doubtful liberalism’ of a Christianity modernized but robbed of its radical spirituality.”

In the book *Christian Science in Germany* Frances Thurber Seal wrote that her teacher, Laura Lathrop, asked the class members to join a Christian Science Church. She states: “I complied with this request, as did other members of the Class, although I did not see the reason for it, as I had not yet seen what the Church means, nor its great importance in the establishment of Truth. During the intervening years, however, the Church of Christ,



Scientist, has been my purest concept of home, and I have learned that it is the highest expression of the kingdom of God in human consciousness.”

Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Retrospection and Introspection*: “Christian Science gives vitality to religion, which is no longer buried in materiality.” Vitality to religion is the vitality of Love, which is its structure. Church, “the structure of Truth and Love,” and being the structure of this Love, don’t we need structure, don’t we need Church? And, Church needs us.

As Paul says we need each other. His words in Romans, read: Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”

Our baskets are *FULL* of divine grace.

I recently received such a dear and wonderful email from a friend. It reads “I thought you might smile at this: the other day I received a letter from the clerk of The Mother Church welcoming me (and others) as new members! I can’t put into words how wonderful it is to finally be ‘home’ with my true family!”

I responded: “welcome to the Church family! Well, you were always a part of it, but now it’s official!”

And what came back was: “Thank you! Yes, I can now see how I was so close for so long, yet so stubborn and mindful. And all the time, I was always family, though I didn’t really understand it. I’m so grateful for having been loved even when I didn’t know I needed it!”

Friends, I think that pretty much sums it up. It’s the love lived and *felt* that brings converts.

### *Now, on Sharing Christian Science*

I have a neighbor who was going through a very difficult time. We had just moved to the neighborhood and I knew nothing about her or her family. But I saw the comings and goings of ambulances and such. One day, I baked brownies and gave them to her, along with a copy of *Science and Health*. I knew I had to share this book with her and it really didn’t matter what the response was going to be. That was between her and God. But I had no right to selfishly withhold. I really didn’t know what I was going to say to her, but the words that came out when I was there, were, that this book contains the recipe for healing and that there was nothing, absolutely nothing, beyond God’s love. And, that if it was not for her that was completely all right. And I left. Well, the winter passed, and I really had no idea what she had thought. And one day as I came home from an errand and was getting out of the car, she saw me and yelled to me. And I’m thinking ‘uh oh!’ But she came and said: “I don’t think I ever thanked you for that book. For that book on the Bible.” And I thought, how interesting. *She Really Got It*. That *Science and Health*

is a book on the Bible. And as we talked I said, “you know, you can open it at random, too,” and she said “yes, that is what I do, like this morning, I open it and read before I go to church” And you know, this dear woman is a Presbyterian . And *before* she goes to church, she opens *Science and Health* and reads it. Now, I wish the response were always like this. There is a fellow in our neighborhood who I gave *Science and Health* to, and he gave it back the same day. But you know it really doesn’t matter. That’s not the point. What matters is the willingness to share. The receptive will be grateful. And in our obedience to divine Love, we know what to do and what not to do. What to say and what not to say. We are all working our way to this. But it does not matter. Live it. Love it, live it, and then we can’t help but share it. It will be the most natural thing to do, as it was for the Master.

Finally, I would like to read a testimony that appears in the book, *A Century of Christian Science Healing*. Interestingly, I have a good friend, and when I was talking with her regarding this testimony, she told me that her Christian Science teacher knew the man who wrote it. Her teacher had been told by the author that there was an addition to the experience, which was not included in the published account. My friend recapped it and sent it to me, which I will read, following the reading of the actual testimony.

“I was living in Hong Kong when the Pacific War broke out, and I was an electrical engineer in the Public Works Department, so was one of about two thousand five hundred Europeans interned by the Japanese Army in January, 1942. We had a sudden switch from foods we had been eating all our lives to a diet that lacked the food elements that a European is used to. Twice a day we had a small soup bowl of rice, sometimes combined with chrysanthemum leaves or thin-leafed water spinach. As a result, the camp was continually full of cases of nutritional diseases, such as beriberi and pellagra or wounds that wouldn’t heal.

“But through what knowledge I had of Christian Science I knew enough about scientific prayer so that I was able to overcome the problem of an insufficient and unbalanced diet. Never once during the whole three years and eight months of internment did I suffer any of the symptoms of the various malnutritional diseases, or any disease at all. In spite of the thin diet, I was not weakened, nor did I lose any weight during the period, and we worked very hard each day. Other Christian Scientists in our group also had similar protection.

“We prayed earnestly and regularly to God to supply our every day needs, and we made a daily study of the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy’s book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. We knew that God supplies daily needs through spiritual ideas and that a grateful frame of mind is an open door for adequate supply. So we made it a practice to be grateful for every little thing, and we quietly voiced this gratitude aloud. I remember

someone speaking of being grateful even to have water coming out of a tap or faucet in camp. We held to this plan of continuous gratitude and found it was very effective, although an American columnist who was also interned with us said one day in a rather puzzled way, ‘You people find the strangest things to be grateful for.’ And as a result of the frequent expression of gratitude, we found many little ways to improve the lot of the whole camp and supplement the meager diet. One of the problems of an imperfect diet was the loss of memory, and many of the people in camp complained of this. In fact, it was not at all uncommon to find that people couldn’t remember the simplest things. But I’m grateful to say that my appreciation of Christian Science not only preserved my physical condition, but my mental faculties. During the period of internment I gave lectures on electrical engineering to a group of fellow internees twice a week for three months, although I had never previously lectured or taught in any way and had no proper textbooks. I had to rely almost entirely on memory.

“Final proof of the power of divine Truth to sustain man, no matter how difficult the circumstances, came at the end of our period of internment as the camp was disbanding. The man who was in charge of the repatriation was asked by one of our group when our turn to be shipped out would come. He said that the Christian Scientists in the camp would be the last to leave because they were the healthiest people there.”

Here is the additional account that my friend relayed to me. She titled it “*Heavenly Tomatoes.*”

“My teacher, a native of England who knew the writer of that testimony quite well, told us in an Association that Mr. Brown shared the following additional detail with him though he left it out of the actual testimony because he didn’t think the public would accept it: At one point during his internment, the prisoners of the camp received Red Cross care packages that included some canned tomatoes. He and the other Christian Scientists decided to plant some of those tomatoes, even though, technically speaking, you can’t grow plants from canned vegetables. The plants did grow, however. And apparently the prisoners enjoyed the resulting tomatoes for quite some time, which was especially helpful since their diet was so limited.”

As Mrs. Eddy has written:

“Feed the hungry, heal the heart,  
Till the mornings beam ....

“I will follow and rejoice  
All the rugged way”

*So, we see how our baskets of spiritual fruition are evident today. We know how to gather, and how to sow -- gratitude first, in gathering the right idea; then, sowing the deep*

roots of understanding -- and obedience to live and share the Truth, which feeds the world's hungering multitudes. And there, we find our baskets *Full*.

There is a poem in *Miscellaneous Writings* with which I would like to close:

“Thou must be true thyself,  
If thou the truth wouldst teach;  
Thy soul must overflow, if thou  
Another's soul wouldst reach;  
It needs the overflow of heart,  
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts  
Shall the world's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a fruitful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed.”

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Calvin Hill's Reminiscence

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