

CHAPTER II.

RESPECTING THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE SCRIPTURAL PROMISES OF PERPETUITY TO A SINCERE CHURCH, IN THE CASE OF THE TWO ANCIENT CHURCHES OF THE VALLENCES AND THE ALBIGENSES.

At an early stage of the present inquiry, it was stated: that Christ has made two distinct promises to his Church.

The one promise respects its perpetuity: under the aspect of a Church, immoveably built upon the rock of Peter's doctrinal confession.

The other promise similarly respects its perpetuity: but under the additional aspect of a Church, always (so far as respects the grand essentials) pure both in doctrine and independent practice, and always thus exemplifying the spiritual presence of the Lord even unto the end of the world.

Hence it was inferred: that the entireness of the complex promise could only receive its accomplishment in some *particular* Branch or Branches of the Visible Church Catholic; inasmuch as FACTS have shewn, by the common consent of all

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men, that the *whole* original Church Catholic, in every Branch, has not corresponded with the full terms of the complex promise in question.

Furthermore, in corroboration of this inference, it was remarked: that the concurrent voice of Prophecy completely and definitely establishes its propriety; inasmuch as Prophecy describes a state of things, in which the Sincere Church should be reduced within narrow limits, while the great Body of the Visible Church, lapsing into an apostasy of a very marked character, should be brought under the dominion of a person or a succession of persons emphatically denominated *The Man of Sin* and *The Son of Perdition* *.

I. At the point where we have *now* arrived, the last remark, which at the *beginning* of the present discussion, was thrown out as a mere illustrative hint, assumes a high degree of applicatory importance and interest.

1. By the prophet of the Apocalypse, our Lord's promise of a spiritual as well as of a doctrinal perpetuity to his Sincere Church is explained after a manner which bears so peculiarly upon the subject of our late inquiries that the coincidence cannot be overlooked.

During a long and dark period of 1260 prophetic days or 1260 natural years; a period, to be reckoned, as we are concurrently taught by Daniel

* See above, book i. chap. 1, 2.

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and St. John, from a delivering of the saints, into the hand of a most remarkable Ecclesiastical Power, by the concurrence of ten Kingdoms, among which the Western Roman Empire was doomed to be partitioned: during this long and dark period, the visible Church General is described as being a Harlot under the government of a False Prophet; and the nature of her harlotry is exhibited under the perfectly intelligible imagery of a relapse into the superstition of the Gentiles, characterised by a worship of demons or canonised dead men, and by an insane veneration of idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

While this dreary period evolves, where is Christ's promise of his perpetual spiritual presence to his sincere Church built immoveably upon the rock of Peter's doctrinal confession?

Truly, the promise is neither forgotten nor unaccomplished.

The new race of Gentiles, indeed, tread the holy city under foot during the cognate term of forty and two prophetic months: but the temple and the altar and they that worship at it are carefully measured; while the outer court, like the wide extent of the city itself, remains unmeasured.

Who, then, are the worshippers within the measured precincts, that stand so broadly distinguished from the idolatrous Gentiles of the unmeasured outer court and holy city?

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Clearly, they are the persons, in whom alone we can deem Christ's promises to have been accomplished.

But these promises respect, not mere insulated individuals, but a visible Branch or visible Branches of the entire visible Church Catholic.

Assuredly they do: and accordingly, the inspired seer intimates; that, during the evolution of the 1260 years, the Lord would give power to his two witnesses, who should courageously, though in sackcloth, prophesy, or propound, in harmony with the predictions of the ancient prophets, the great essential truths of the Gospel.

Who or what, then, are these two Witnesses, thus remarkably characterised?

The oracle tells us, that they are two Candlesticks standing before the God of the earth: and, at the same time, leaves us in no doubt as to the intended meaning of the symbol, by distinctly teaching us, that a Candlestick represents a Church*.

Such being the case, the two Witnesses, who are defined to be two Candlesticks, are thence, of plain necessity, defined also to be two Churches.

Consequently, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, or the Revelation communicated by Jesus Christ to his servant John, distinctly and unequivocally explains to us, now the promises of the Lord to

* Compare Rev. i. 20, with Rev. xi. 4.

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his Church were destined to receive their accomplishment.

The perpetuity of his sincere Church, as alike sound in the great fundamental doctrine of Peter's confession, and as privileged with the unceasing spiritual presence of the Divine Head, is described, as being effected in the channel of two visible Churches: which, abhorring the apostasy of the gentiling tenants of the outer court and the degraded holy city, firmly and faithfully proclaim the true Gospel in chronological concurrence with a state of things widely marked by the worship of dead men and their images.

This is the explanation of Christ's own promises, as afforded in Christ's own Revelation *.

* The circumstance of precisely two witnessing Churches being foretold, united with our Lord's general prophecy that the gates of Hades or the Invisible State shall never prevail against his Sincere Church, finally and distinctly establishes the position: that *We must look for a continuance of sound and spiritual religion, throughout all the middle ages, in a VISIBLE and ORGANISED Church or succession of Churches.*

It is clear, I think, that the concurrent predictions of Christ and St. John cannot, without a most arbitrary and unnatural strain upon the terms in which they are conveyed, be said to have been accomplished in a mere succession of detached and unconnected individuals, jointly constituting what some have styled *The INVISIBLE Church*. So manifestly are Churches VISIBLE and TANGIBLE spoken of, that, if the prophecies have not been accomplished in *such* actually subsisting Communions, they have never been accomplished at all. The figment of an INVISIBLE Church can *here* have no place.

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torical fact, that the doctrines and practices of the visible Church General, whether in the Western or in the Eastern Patriarchate, have but too faithfully reflected the announcements of descriptive prophecy.

But was the *whole* Church General, in *all* its Branches, thus apostatic, thus grievously degenerate?

If it were so, the promises of Christ would have failed of their accomplishment. But not one word or one tittle of his declarations can come to nought. While both the East and the West were playing the harlot after a new race of tutelary Baalim or Demon-Gods, exactly two Churches were found to protest, even unto the death of the protesting individuals, against the antichristian abominations with which they were surrounded.

One of them, itself a Church built upon the very principle of reformation, and by an extraordinary providence of God collecting many of its members from among those who had once professed a paganising heresy of the worst description, sprang up in the East during the course of the seventh century: but, expelled by incessant persecution brought on by its firm testimony against the rapidly-increasing corruption of the times, it migrated into Europe; and there also, in the midst both of unfounded calumny and of suffering carried at length to the verge of extermination, it shewed itself a faithful witness for the

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2. Now many centuries have elapsed, since ten gothic nations erected ten several kingdoms on the platform of the divided Western Empire; and certainly, from that time, it is a mere naked his-

I mean not to assert, that, with a proper explanation, the phrase can *never* be used: but I certainly must assert, that, in the *present* case, the very terms of the prophecies now before us forbid its introduction as affording a sufficient explanation of the accomplishment of Christ's promises.

As for those Protestants, who strangely labour to malign the Valencens and the Albigenens, they do not seem to perceive the inevitable tendency of their worse than bootless efforts.

We must either admit, that the Church of Rome is a perfectly sound and spiritual Church: or we must produce some VISIBLE Church or Churches, in which the succession of doctrinal soundness and abiding spirituality has been preserved.

Now, if, as these ill-judging men endeavour to shew, the *latter* be impossible: then, unless we admit the promises of Scripture to have *never* been fulfilled, we must acknowledge the truth of the *former*; and, in that case, our reformation and separation from the Roman Church stand condemned by our own sentence.

Writers of the stamp alluded to preclude themselves from all ability to answer the argument of Bossuet: and thence, even by *their own* shewing, can never vindicate *their own* theological position.

The question will always run: *If Rome be a sound and spiritual Church, in which the promises of Christ have been fulfilled; why do you dissent from her, and renounce her communion? If you deny to her this character; where is the VISIBLE Church, in which Christ's promises have been accomplished?*

How the protestant maligners of the Valencens and the Albigenens can answer this question, I am at a loss to perceive.

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truth in opposition to the still more gross demonolatry of the Western Patriarchate.

The other of them, justly claiming and honestly glorying in the title of an Unreformed Church, was always a denizen of Europe: and, while the two conjointly, during all the middle ages, acted the part of resolute witnesses on behalf of the Gospel; this Occidental Society, under the precise aspect of a Church Unreformed, because it never required reformation, forms the chain, which, in an unbroken series, connects the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century with the Apostolic Primitive Church, and thus exemplifies the accurate accomplishment of our Lord's two-fold or complex promise.

3. With these facts under our eyes while the roll of prophecy lies unfolded before us, it is, I think, well nigh impossible not to conclude: that the two Churches of the Albigenens and the Valencens are the two symbolical Candlesticks or the two Witnessing Churches of that Apocalypse, which at once predicts the future fortunes of the entire Church Catholic and authoritatively explains the mode in which Christ's promises of perpetuity and purity would be fulfilled.

In truth, if these two Churches be *not* the two apocalyptic Churches, I see not where, between the decuple partition of the Western Empire and the times in which we are now living, the two latter Churches can be found in History: and

<p>540 THE VALLENSES [BOOK IV.]</p> <p>thence, since the apocalyptic prophecy is evidently a virtual comment upon our Lord's promises, I see not, how those promises can be said to have ever been accomplished.</p> <p>Their pretended fulfilment, in a Church so notoriously corrupt and apostatic and secularised and blood-stained and unscriptural as the Roman, is, both to the Bible and to common sense, too monstrous an insult to be for a moment tolerated : and almost as little can we endure the supposition of their accomplishment in the Greek Church or in any one of its dependent Asiatic or African Churches*.</p> <p>But prophecy teaches us : that the promised perpetuity and purity were to be carried on and transmitted through the instrumentality of two Churches ; characterised, in a manner which instantaneously excludes the gorgeous and temporally prosperous Roman Church, by a long-continued prophesying in sackcloth, or, in unfigured language, by a long-continued predication of the true Gospel in a depressed and afflicted and despised condition.</p> <p>And history responsively teaches us : that exactly two Churches, precisely so characterised both circumstantially and locally and chronologically, have actually appeared upon earth ; and</p> <p>* On this point, see Gibbon's Hist. of Decline and Fall, chap. xlix., l. vol. ix. p. 113, 114, 115, 261, 262.</p>		<p>CHAP. II.] AND ALBIGENSES. 541</p> <p>have actually subsisted through all the middle ages.</p> <p>The conclusion from such premises is obvious : and, as I perceive not how it can be avoided, so likewise I perceive not how it can be rejected without a consequential admission, at least on the part of the Reformed Churches, that the promises of Christ have failed in their accomplishment. For, if they were not accomplished through the medium of the Vallensic and Albigenic Churches : let any Protestant, if he be able in consistency with his own principles, point out, <i>how</i> they were accomplished, during the period which elapsed, between the days of the uncorrupted Primitive Church, and the times of the sixteenth century.</p> <p>II. But, in the prophetic account of the two Witnessing Churches, there is a very remarkable circumstance announced, which will throw yet further light upon the present subject.</p> <p>They are exhibited under the two-fold aspect of two not precisely identical conditions : for they are exhibited under the aspect, of prophesying in sackcloth, or of preaching the Gospel in a depressed and afflicted condition ; and they are also exhibited under the aspect, of bearing their <i>martyria</i>, or of attesting the truth even to martyrdom itself.</p> <p>Now we are told : that, when they should have finished, not the former of these, but the latter, they should be slain in their ecclesiastical capa-</p>	
<p>542 THE VALLENSES [BOOK IV.]</p> <p>city, or should be dissolved as Churches, for in no other mode can a Church be slain ; that their dead bodies, or the constituent members of the dissolved Communities, should lie unburied, or should not be consigned to invisibility and oblivion, during the time of three prophetic days and a half or three natural years and a half, upon the platform of that great city, which is spiritually called <i>Sodom</i> and <i>Egypt</i>, and which mystically bears the name of <i>Babylon</i> ; that, at the end of three years and a half, the breath of life from God should enter into them, so that they should stand again upon their feet, or that they should be restored to their condition of visible corporate Churches ; and that, finally, they should ascend to heaven in a cloud before the face of their enemies, or should obtain a legalised establishment, though still under the cloud of affliction, inasmuch as they had still to accomplish the remainder of the appointed term during which they should prophesy in sackcloth.</p> <p>These are all very peculiar and very distinctly marked circumstances : nor is it easy to conceive, how they could ever occur in strict simultaneity, unless the two Churches had previously, in point of geographical location, been so amalgamated, as to form one mingled Church of both the Albigenes and the Vallenses. But exactly such an amalgamation took place about the middle of the thirteenth century, in consequence of the bloody</p>		<p>CHAP. II.] AND ALBIGENSES. 543</p> <p>popish crusade conducted by Simon de Montfort. Hence, if the two Churches of History be the two Churches of Prophecy, we may expect a congruity, in regard to the above-mentioned circumstances, at some indefinite time after the middle of the thirteenth century*.</p> <p>It is obvious, from the very terms of the prediction : that the <i>absolute martyrdom</i>, or the <i>testification even unto death</i> on the part of the two Witnesses or the two Churches, is brought to a close, when the announced circumstances occur ; so that, notwithstanding, even after their legal establishment, they still continue to <i>prophesy in sackcloth</i>, they are no longer exposed to the horrors of a <i>direct brutal butchery</i> instigated by the Romish Priesthood and perpetrated by the Romish Laity. Hence, if we find indications that such <i>direct butchery</i> has ceased, we may conclude : that the circumstances in question, on the supposition of the two historical Churches being the two prophetic Churches, must have already occurred.</p> <p>* In saying this, I speak with reference to History, not with reference to Prophecy. In the latter, the circumstances are defined, as occurring synchronically with a great allegorical earthquake which throws down a tenth part of the mystical city Babylon, and immediately before the passing away of the second woe. These synchronisms are noted and explained in my Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, book iv. chap. 7. § II. 5, and book v. chap. 2. § III. 2.</p>	

1. In order to satisfy ourselves on this point, we must, in the first instance, recur to the annals of direct sanguinary persecution.

The exterminating crusade, waged against the Albigenes in the thirteenth century, with its remarkable effects, has already been noticed. At this point, we must advert to the persecutions, carried on jointly against both them and the Valdenses, with whom they had now become inseparably amalgamated.

A recent historian of the Vallenses has given a very useful list of the successive persecutions to which his people have been exposed: and, as this list merely details a succession of *facts*, I may resort to it with the strictest propriety.

In brief, the various bloody assaults, to which the united Vallensic and Albigenic Church of the Cottian Alps was exposed, from an early part of the thirteenth century down to the latter part of the seventeenth century, comprising a term of nearly five hundred years, amount in number to about twenty-six, and consequently average about five in each century, or about one in every twenty years*.

But here, through divine mercy, they are brought to a close: and nothing, save vexation and bigotted annoyance, has occurred subsequently to the year 1690.

* See Muston's Hist. des Vaudois, vol. i. p. 322, 323.

It is true, indeed, that an edict was passed in the year 1698, which proscribed a portion of the Vallenses, who had advanced, I suppose, beyond their strictly limited boundaries: it is true, moreover, that, in the year 1730, Victor Amadeus banished from his dominions all save the *native* Vallenses. But, as Dr. Muston styles this the *last* persecution which they had to undergo; a persecution, however, not amounting to martyrdom: so Mr. Acland, speaking of persecutions stained with the blood of the martyrs, justly remarks, that that, which commenced with the year 1686, was the *LAST and most oppressive persecution of the Vaudois*; and he subsequently adds, that, from the time when the edict was passed which banished those who were not natives, *the only distinguishable features in Vaudois history are resignation to an oppressive government and adherence to their faith and the practices inculcated by it**.

Thus, from naked facts, it seems clear: that the blood-stained testimony or martyrdom of the two Churches ceased at the latter end of the seventeenth century. Hence, the circumstances, of their violent ecclesiastical extinction, and of their complete ecclesiastical revival at the end of three years and a half, and their legal though

* Muston's Hist. des Vaud. vol. i. p. 323. Acland's Translat. of Glorious Recovery, Pref. p. vi. Sequel. p. 210.

afflictive establishment subsequent to their revival, must apparently, if the two Churches of History be the two Churches of Prophecy, have occurred, when the seventeenth century was drawing near to its conclusion.

2. The question, therefore, now is; a question, be it observed, of naked matter of fact: the question now is; *Whether, at that time, any such circumstances occurred?*

This question must, of course, be answered by a simple appeal to the record of History.

On the 31st day of January, then, in the year 1686, the Duke of Savoy, at the instigation of the French King, issued an edict: by which, on pain of death, he forbid to the Vaudois the exercise of their religion, banished all their pastors, and commanded their places of worship to be destroyed.

The effect, produced by a decree of such a barbarous description, may easily be anticipated. France and Savoy let loose their blood-hounds upon an innocent and unoffending people: murders and rapes and every abomination followed: and, the Valleys in a very short space of time having been wholly depopulated by the expulsion of their former inhabitants, the place of the fugitives was supplied by the colonising adherents of the dominant superstition.

Thus were the two ancient united Churches completely suppressed and dissolved: a calamity,

which at no former period had ever befallen them: yet, scattered far and wide, their fragments, though disunited as a body corporate, still retained their separate existence. In the course of God's providence, they were not suffered to vanish utterly from off the face of the earth: they were not suffered to be lost and absorbed in the several Communions of those Reformed States, within whose territorial dominions they had taken refuge. On the contrary, though the two Churches were politically dissolved, their members were individually preserved from complete annihilation.

In this state they continued, during the space of three years and a half.

But, at the end of that period, the spirit of life entered into them: and they began once more to act corporately and simultaneously. Under the conduct of a very extraordinary man, Henry Arnold one of their Pastors, eight hundred of the most intrepid among them, having assembled in the Swiss Territory, secretly, on the night of the 16th of August in the year 1689, crossed the lake of Geneva: and entering Savoy with their swords in their hands, and thence advancing to the mountains of Piedmont, drove from their native Valleys the intrusive Romanists, and recovered by main force their ancient avital possessions. In this wonderful enterprise so complete was their success, that ere the month of April in the year 1690 had commenced, after a series of victories

	<p>548 THE VALLENCES [BOOK IV.]</p> <p>over the disciplined troops of France and Savoy, they had firmly established themselves in the seats of their ancestors.</p> <p>Nor did their triumph terminate here. In the course of God's providence, events were so ordered that the Duke of Savoy was led to desert the French Interest: and, in consequence of this new political arrangement, by an edict dated the 4th of June in the year 1690, he recalled and reestablished the remainder of the now mixed Valencens and Albigenes; granting to them henceforth, though with many vexatious restrictions, the exercise of the religion of their forefathers.</p> <p>Thus were these two ancient united Churches built up anew, and solemnly established by an act of the civil power, in those identical valleys of the Cottian Alps, where the Albigenic Church, when driven out of the South of France by the crusade of the thirteenth century, had finally joined itself to the sister Church of the Valencens*.</p> <p>Yet, though legally established, or, in the figured language of prophecy, called up to the</p> <p>* Whiston's Essay on the Rev. part. iii. p. 238—241. Jones's Hist. of the Christ. Church. vol. ii. p. 406—444. Gilly's Narrat. p. 171—178. The reader may particularly consult Arnold's Glorious Recovery, as translated and illustrated and beautifully edited by Mr. Acland. I would also refer him to my own <i>Sacred Calendar of Prophecy</i>, for a full establishment of the synchronisms prophetically connected with these particulars, book v. chap. 2. § III.</p>		<p>CHAP. II.] AND ALBIGENSES. 549</p> <p>allegorical heaven; and though exempt from any longer bearing the testimony of a blood-stained martyrdom to the truths of the everlasting Gospel: they still, agreeably to the divine oracle, continue to prophesy in sackcloth or to perform their functions in a depressed and afflicted condition, and thus practically indicate that the grand period of 1260 years has not yet expired.</p> <p>Under the letter of this legal establishment, such as it is, the united Churches at present subsist: but instead of merely excluding them from political power, it exposes them to a perpetual succession of very serious injuries, short indeed of persecution to death, but utterly destructive of social comfort and civil prosperity.</p> <p>The Valencens are forbidden to reside or to purchase land beyond the limits of certain specified boundaries: nor can a minister visit a sick person who happens to be beyond those limits unless he be accompanied by a romish layman; and, even then, his stay must not exceed twenty-four hours.</p> <p>All correspondence with foreign ministers is prohibited: and, in order that no books should be introduced among them, immense duties are imposed, particularly on Bibles and works treating of Religion.</p> <p>Any physician, surgeon, apothecary, advocate, or notary, brought up to their religion, cannot</p>	
	<p>550 THE VALLENCES. [BOOK IV.]</p> <p>exercise his profession beyond the limits of the Valleys*.</p> <p>They are forbidden to inclose their burial grounds with walls.</p> <p>* The oppressiveness of this particular seems recently, in the true spirit of the ever tyrannical and persecuting Popish Church, to have been increased. In the <i>Nouvelliste Vaudois</i> of Sep. 22, 1837, is contained the following article.</p> <p><i>We have been impatiently expecting this long time the publication of the new Civil Code, which a Committee of jurists has been labouring at during the last seven years. We had hoped, that, in the absence of political liberty, we should at least be blessed with a good civil legislation: but our expectations, I am sorry to say, have been most cruelly deceived. The Code in question has just appeared: and the first thing, that struck us on opening the book, was a legislative enactment which throws us back at least two centuries. The Protestants are placed, by the new Code, in a condition inferior to that of the Jews, as regards civil rights. A circular has lately been addressed to all public notaries, forbidding them to draw up deeds in favour of Protestants, such as acts for the alienation or purchase of property. Persons of that persuasion are no longer to be allowed to give evidence as witnesses. In short we are replaced under the law of 1610. Behold how we proceed in the walk of civilization!</i></p> <p>Disgraceful as such conduct is on the part of the minions of Popery, it serves only to display the wonderful accuracy of the apocalyptic oracle.</p> <p><i>I will give power unto my two witnesses: and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.</i> Rev. xi. 3.</p> <p>The fated period has not yet evolved. Therefore the witnessing Churches still prophesy in a state of insult and injury and oppression.</p>		<p>CHAP. II.] AND ALBIGENSES. 551</p> <p>If a Papist steal the child of a Vaudois for the purpose of proselytism, or if he insult him in the public streets by calling him <i>dog</i> or <i>heretic</i>, the Vaudois has no redress.</p> <p>They are compelled to abstain from work on all popish festivals, though they themselves have never been followers of the Pope's religion: and a refusal to uncover the head to a wooden doll, representing some saint real or reputed, when ridiculously carried in procession by its silly worshippers, subjects them to a fine or imprisonment*.</p> <p>These are the tender mercies of dominant Popery in its mildest form: and, as we all know, the well-grounded boast of Romanism is, that it never changes. The tiger, as in France, may be coerced, by the civil power: but, in nature and disposition, the tiger is the tiger still.</p> <p>III. The series of facts, here detailed by the voice of History, requires but little comment.</p> <p>So far as simple coincidence, between the facts and the prophecy, is concerned, a denial of such simple coincidence is plainly impossible: and, when we recollect, that, as the prediction announces the existence of precisely <i>two</i> Witnessing Churches, so History records the actual existence of <i>two</i> such Churches; we can scarcely, I think,</p> <p>* See Brief Observ. on the present state of the Valdenses, by Gorges Lowther, Esq.</p>	

<p>552 THE VALLENCES AND ALBIGENSES. [BOOK IV.</p> <p>deem this concurrence of coincidences purely accidental or undesigned.</p> <p>But, if we admit that the two Churches of History are the two Churches of Prophecy, we shall then, by a necessary consequence have the plain attestation of Scripture to the important position : that Christ's promises of Perpetuity and Purity to his faithful Church were accomplished, in the long unbroken line of the Vallenses, and (on the principle of ecclesiastical agglomeration) in the shorter line of the Paulicians or Albigenses; and that, through their intermediation and more especially through the intermediation of the never reformed Vallenses, the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century stand directly connected with the holy Primitive Church Catholic.</p>	
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