

The Minister's Corner

WHY WE BELIEVE

BY THE REV. E. B. GOODWIN

Why do Christians believe that Jesus, in His own body, glorified and incorruptible, rose from the dead? We believe because it is an historical fact proved by the testimony of those who saw Him after His Resurrection. That testimony is contained in the Scriptures and in the writings of the men who conversed with the Apostles and with others who saw Christ after the resurrection.

No one today who has any knowledge of the transmission of the Scriptures and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers hesitates to admit that we have those writings in their integrity as they came from their authors. We have certitude with regard to them similar to that which we have of the writings of Cicero, or of a deed the original of which has been destroyed but which exist in an authentic copy.

As the Scriptural writers and Apostolic Fathers were certainly men of intelligence and of absolute honesty it is sheer arrogance to assume that they may have been mistaken and that we are able to judge more accurately than they of the facts they relate.

What is the testimony? The four Evangelists narrate the resurrection of Christ, His appearances, and agree with regard to the empty tomb. St. Paul says: "I hand down to you what I have received," that is, the death of Christ, His burial, His Resurrection, and His appearing to many. It should be remembered that he wrote and spoke to men who could easily have disproved what he said if that which he wrote and spoke were false. He was not uttering theological truths but merely stating historical facts, provable by historical and available evidence. I mentioned St. Paul not because he alone of the Apostolic writers wrote of the resurrection but because his letters happen to follow the evangelistic writings. All the New Testament letters contain evidence of the fact of the resurrection. The bodily resurrection of Jesus was a fact of which the Apostles were absolutely certain.

About the year 98, that is thirty four years after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul and while St. John was living, Clement of Rome wrote his letter to the Corinthians. We have it as he wrote it. In that letter he wrote of the resurrection of "Jesus Christ, the Lord, from the dead," and no one contradicted him. About 107 Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, speaks of Christ as "our God, Jesus the Christ who was conceived by Mary of the Holy Spirit," and who "was truly raised from the dead." And Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who died in 155 wrote: "whoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts and says that there is no resurrection,—this man is the first born of Satan." After Polycarp came Justin Martyr and Irenaeus and in their writings, which we may read today, are clear convincing testimonies of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

These are some of the reasons of our belief. If the testimony be false then every narrative of every event of which we have no personal experience is false. The testimony is from active, sincere, truthful men who knew whereof they wrote. Are we justified in doubting them? Does the wisest man who lived fifteen, sixteen, nineteen hundred years after the historical fact know more than they who saw it.

Safely, then, may we rely on the testimony of St. Paul and of St. Ignatius, and of Polycarp who said when he was urged by the Roman magistrate to deny Christ, "Four-score and six years have I been serving Him, and He hath done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me." Belief in the resurrection is ground for believing in the divinity of Christ. As Ignatius said, we may believe "our God is Jesus Christ."

Because of the resurrection we believe in the survival of personality after death. All around us are evidences of immortality. Before the resurrection the difficulty was in believing in the immortality of the individual. Christ in His infinite goodness has removed that difficulty. We shall live, not as formless beings but as ourselves. The kind of future life we shall live fundamentally depends on whether as reasonable men we accept the testimony of those who saw the risen Christ, or irrationally reject it. Either way there is the fact. Christ has indeed risen, and Easter is the symbol of our hope.

LETTER LEFT OUT

We have a long letter from Mr. Daniels on the subject of Sunday movies which was crowded out this week. Watch for it next week.

"MOVIES" BOTH ON SUNDAYS AND OTHER WEEK DAY

H. S. Dum Writes About What is Done With the Silent Drama by Government.

Dear Mr. Staats:

As a certain famous Roman Senator of old is reputed always to have begun his every speech with "Carthage must be destroyed," which finally, sinking deeply into the national consciousness, resulted in the ultimate destruction of Rome's mortal enemy; even so, if we could succeed in driving home to our people the vital importance of our having in Downers Grove a Genuine Community Center building, I am sure that in due time we, too, should be able to secure a definite realization of this much-to-be-desired goal — to our greater advantage every way, including the no mean one of a Means of Better Understanding of "The Other Fellow." In other words, it is to be hoped that those who evidently felt that the Sunady movie, as presently conducted at least, is not the best thing for us to have, will now proceed to Take Some Positive Steps in the Right Direction of a non-commercialized, innocent and uplifting entertainment. For while it is alright, and sometimes a necessary process, to tear down, yet it renders building up all the more imperative—a fact

in the spiritual order as well in the material world.

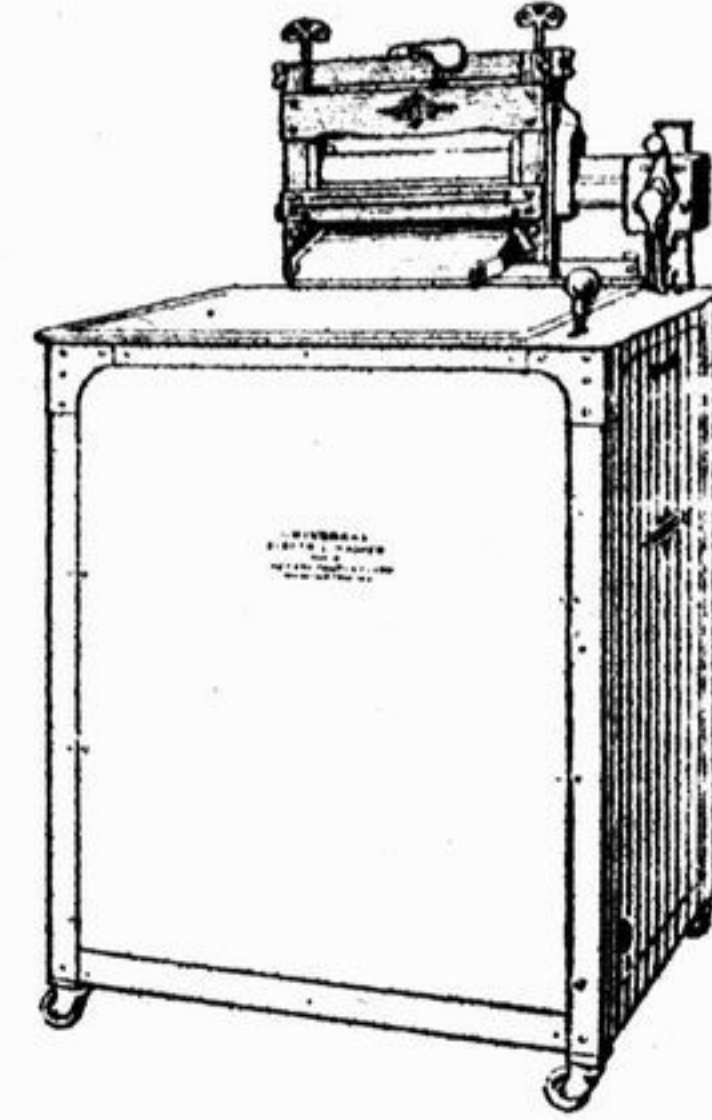
In view of the interest extraordinary that seems to be aroused in our normally quiet village, on this subject of Motion Pictures in relation to our community well-being, it occurs to me, therefore, that probably your readers will be pleased to hear the story of what undoubtedly is the most ambitious endeavor to utilize this most efficient agency for the dissemination of knowledge, where financial gain is not obtrusively to the front, but, on the contrary, altruism is rampant. The general tenor of the letters in last week's issue of The Reporter, I thought, were rather pessimistic of the possibilities of Motion Pictures for good. I shall go further, asserting that a great deal of Theatrical film is exercising a tremendously disastrous influence—due to the unfortunate situation that the heads of the producing companies appear totally unconcerned with moral considerations, being of a truth those who could better qualify for—well, Ford is "hitting the nail pretty squarely on the head" in his "Dear-born Independent," and in the same breath would like to add that while as a rule we should deplore such controversies, yet the power of the Movies are used so fearfully to our hurt these days, that I am satisfied results worth-while will follow the "jarring" he is dishing out to some folks who need it badly, not because

(Continued on page 7)



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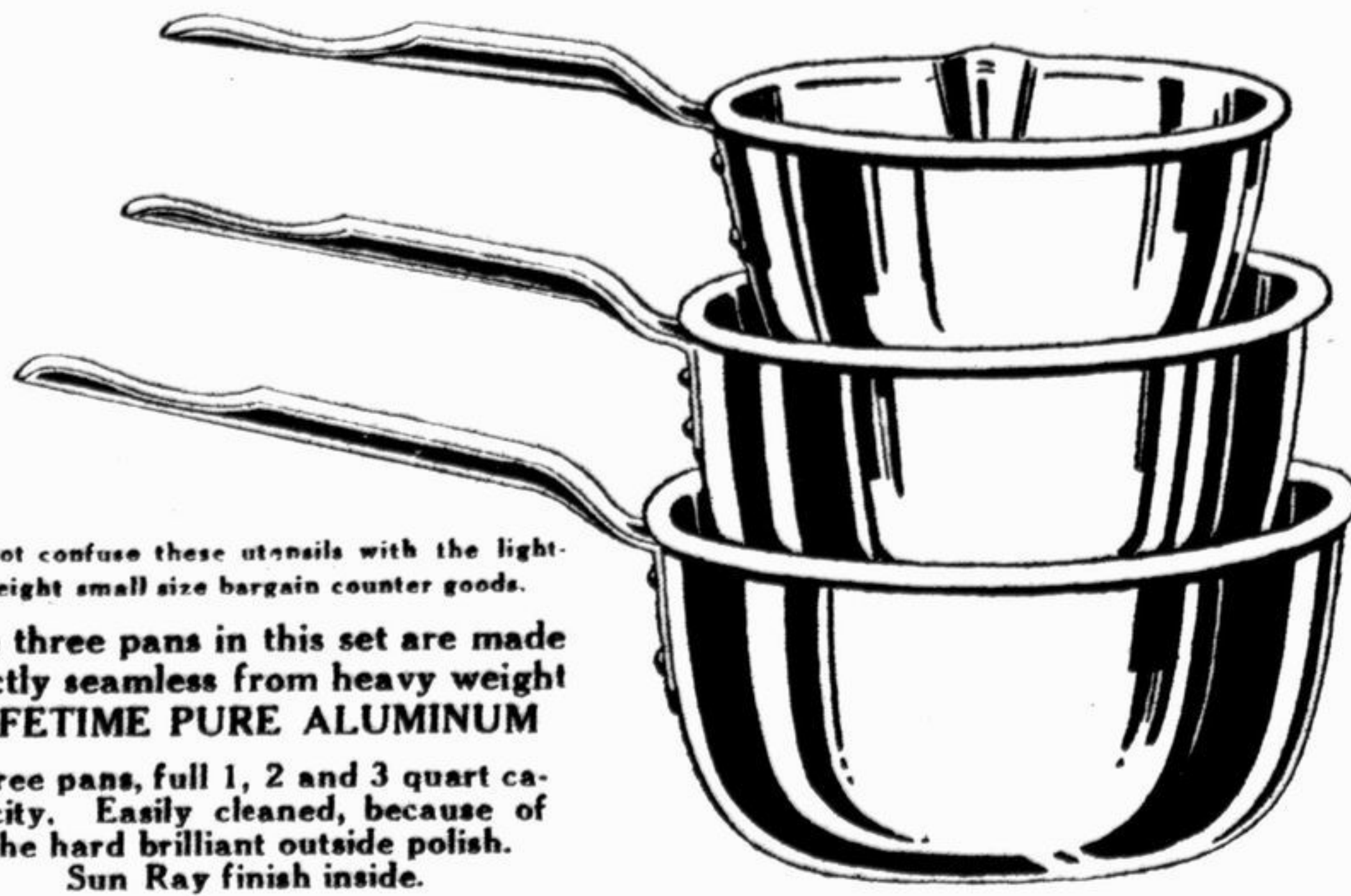


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