

WHY I LEFT THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Claude A. Guild

That fall, there was a call that came on the old country telephone that there was going to be preaching down in the schoolhouse. They didn't know just what stripe or color or kind it was, but it was different to anything we had been hearing, and they were sending the invitation around. Mother and father would not let us children go the first night, for they wanted to see and hear for themselves. The first night my parents heard something that they had never heard before. They heard the gospel preached in an unadulterated way, just as it is written in the word of God. And, at the end of the first service, my mother went to Brother J. C. Bailey, and asked him about infant baptism, and said she'd like to know if there is any passage in the Bible that would authorize it. He said, "Good woman, you go home tonight, and you search your Bible. If you can find infant baptism in your Bible and show me just one passage, one will satisfy me, I'll be sprinkled and be a Lutheran preacher the rest of my life. If you can't find it in your Bible, I'll show it to you in the catechism; and in turn, I'll want you then, when it is not found in the Bible, to be immersed for the remission of sins and become a Christian.

My folks had searched the Bible, not only that night, but many nights before that, and months before that, but this was the first time that it had ever dawned upon us that there were contradictions between these two books, the Bible and the Lutheran Catechism. We had been taught to believe that this book simply made the Bible plain, that you had to understand the Bible through reading of this volume. To memorize the articles of the Catechism was essential to the understanding of the word of God. This was the first time that it had dawned on us that the two might conflict or contradict each other. At the close of the second service, Brother Bailey showed the conflict between the two volumes, and with which contrast tonight, I hope I can satisfy your minds, too.

The next night, after my mother heard the third gospel sermon, she came forward and made the good confession. A man living in the community by the name of C. V. Barnhart took a triple-bed wagon box and dammed up the creek so there could be water for immersion, While the water was rising, and during the time she was being baptized, my mother's father—my own grandfather—her own brothers and neighbors, who had religious affiliation with the same institution, rode on horses around the baptismal scene and cursed and swore. But my mother continued in the baptismal, was baptized by Brother Bailey in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins and has never given up the faith to this good day. She is strong and living to this good night. Thank God for that.

After that, Brother Bailey wanted to see my father become a Christian too, He said, "Listen, I didn't get to make up my mind the first time. She led me before the

minister and I had to read before him eighteen months to become a Lutheran, and this time I'm going to make up my own mind." I may be a little of the disposition of my father, but anyhow my father was going to make up his own mind in this thing. He was running coal mines. Brother J. C. Bailey took off his white collar, went into the coal mines with my father and mined coal for six weeks. But he had other things in mind beside mining coal by tonnage and making a wage. While he mined, he preached to my father; and after six weeks he baptized him; and along with baptizing my father, he baptized my oldest brother and sister and myself. Since that good day, including my baby brother who was baptized into Christ just about ten days ago, my entire family—father and mother and the ten children—all have been baptized into Christ. And there, if you please, is just a little historical background to the reasons why we left the Lutheran Church.

Deceased

(From the book, *Why I Left* (1949), pp 100-101)