

## ▸ 5. “Apologetics for ‘Feelings-Oriented’ People”

John Warwick Montgomery, “Sensible Christianity” [an audio series]

### I. ▸ **Notion seems, on the surface, to be a very strange one.**

A. ▸ How could there be an apologetic for the “tender-minded person?”

1. ▸ Isn’t apologetics essentially for the “tough-minded?”

a. ▸ that is, presenting hard reasons in behalf of the Christian faith to those who have hard intellectual objections?

b. ▸ normal way of thinking about this: It deals with the “tough-minded” type only; the “tender-minded” person not really within the purview of Christian apologetics.

c. ▸ Usual: “The ‘tender-minded’ person is to be *preached* to rather than argued with.”

B. ▸ distinction between “tough-minded” and “tender-minded”

1. ▸ from William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

2. ▸ Dr. M.: “I’m convinced that there *is* a legitimate apologetic for the ‘tender-minded.’”

a. ▸ In our generation, we need to know what that apologetic is

b. ▸ Why? Because so many in our day have attempted to abandon a “tough-minded” approach to the world.

i. ▸ have done this as a reaction to modern science & technology

ii. ▸ have reacted from intellectual pursuits, moved into an area where *feeling* counts more than *thinking*

iii. ▸ Why? We’ve covered it already.

(1). ▸ Luther: “The natural man staggers from-wall-to-wall.”

(2). ▸ knocks himself senseless against one wall, then staggers across and knocks himself senseless against the other wall

C. ▸ History of the Swing in our day

1. ▸ In 19th century, there was a tremendous emphasis on science & technology as having the potential for solving man’s problems.

2. ▸ But then came two World Wars!

3. ▸ caused the pendulum to swing radically in the opposite direction, away from such optimism

a. ▸ over to a sort of “gut-level” existentialism

b. ▸ No one feels that he or she can get *any* absolute or final answers.

c. ▸ seems that everyone’s answers are limited to his own existential situation, the confines of his own existence

d. ▸ is a general “cloudiness of mind” in which people’s main concern is with *feeling* and *experience*

### II. ▸ **Bourgeois Betrayal?**

- A. ▶ center of this attitude: notion that science & technology are a part of the bourgeois, money-making establishment, have betrayed us
  - 1. ▶ only answer to this betrayal: “to stop the world and get off,” to dump that lifestyle & perspective
    - a. ▶ instead, move into a different kind of life—one that centers on feelings
    - b. ▶ explains much of the heightened interest in Eastern religions (they stress inner experience apart from any objective means of testing)
  - 2. ▶ example: discussion with a Buddhist
    - a. ▶ adherent is *not concerned* with any “objective proofs of Buddhism”
    - b. ▶ instead, he suggests to you that you enter into Buddhism, experience it for yourself, find the satisfaction it offers
    - c. ▶ many Christians, faced with this, feel totally helpless
      - i. ▶ have gotten into the habit of *not* offering any kind of apologetic
      - ii. ▶ have themselves presented only a subjective, “feeling-kind” of response to people’s interest in religion
      - iii. ▶ find themselves saying the same things as the Eastern religions do
        - (1). ▶ As the Buddhist says, “Try the 8-fold path,” Christian has said, “Try Jesus! I found satisfaction there.”
    - d. ▶ difficulty with this approach
      - i. ▶ person who is looking for satisfaction hears a number of people who say that their particular approach provides what he seeks is stymied!
      - ii. ▶ What is he to do in that situation?
        - (1). ▶ try to experience *all* of those religions? Life isn’t long enough!
        - (2). ▶ Ogdon Nash poem, “The Seven Spiritual Stages of Mrs. Marmaduke Moore”
          - (a). ▶ Every 10 years, Mrs. Marmaduke Moore leaps into another religion!
          - (b). ▶ “With a whoop and a holler, she leaped into the land of the “Sweet Bhai Bahai!”

### III. ▶ **The Endless Experiment**

- A. ▶ If you try to handle your religious problems that way, you simply won’t get anywhere.
- B. ▶ The minute you commit to something, it has such an impact on you that usually takes a long time to extricate yourself from it when it proves not to be adequate.
  - 1. ▶ illustration: Arthur Koestler giving his whole being to Marxism
    - a. ▶ took him 10 years to get out of that (*The God That Failed*)
    - b. ▶ Then Koestler tried “the founts of Eastern wisdom” in his quest for answers (*both* Hinduism & Buddhism)
    - c. ▶ Problem: he didn’t find any true wisdom there.
    - d. ▶ His account (*The Lotus and the Robot*) is, in some ways, a kind of hilarious travelogue of what occurs when you visit gurus & mystics.

- i. ▶ “In one instance, Koestler went up the mountain with much difficulty to find a particularly attractive guru. He spent half an hour with the guru, but the guru said not one single word in the course of the half-hour. Koestler told him all his difficulties, while the guru assiduously picked his toenails for the entire session.”
- C. ▶ The point: You *can't* be continually “jumping from one thing to another.”
  - 1. ▶ Life isn't long enough to cover every option.
  - 2. ▶ And how would you start? Try all the religions in alphabetical order?!
  - 3. ▶ *And* by the time you would have gone through six or seven of these, you would be so jaded psychologically that you wouldn't know religious truth if it had a sign on it!

#### IV. ▶ **The Evangelical Dilemma**

- A. ▶ This is exactly the difficulty which the Evangelical encounters when he tries to deal with the “tender-minded” person.
  - 1. ▶ On the surface at least, it seems that the *only* thing he can do in such situations is to provide a testimony and the suggestion to “try Christianity.”
  - 2. ▶ Problem: that brings Christianity down to the same level as the other religions of the world that offer no objective evidence in its behalf.
- B. ▶ How can we deal with this kind of problem?
  - 1. ▶ Objective evidence doesn't seem to have any influence on the “tender-minded” person, because he has moved away from objectivity, science, and rationality.
  - 2. ▶ On the other hand, if we don't use anything that provides objective reference, how can we possibly be in any different position from the other religions of the world that are saying, “Try it. You'll like it?”
  - 3. ▶ looks like an impossible dilemma!
    - a. ▶ I don't think it is. I think there is a way past this.
    - b. ▶ I want to talk about the problem on 2 levels, to divide the “tender-minded” category into two sub-categories.
    - c. ▶ are, of course, extreme
      - i. ▶ am simply describing “the limiting situation” in both instances
        - (1). ▶ will *not* find people falling directly into either one of these sub-categories
        - ii. ▶ still, usually best to present your case in its most “clean-cut” form (“bleedings” can come later).

#### V. ▶ **The Lower-Level “Tender-Minded”**

- A. ▶ need to distinguish between the “lower level” & the “upper level” tender-minded
- B. ▶ what we mean by the “lower level tender-minded”
  - 1. ▶ people who have trouble focusing their attention sufficiently to memorize the words of a Simon and Garfunkel song
  - 2. ▶ mean the person who has really “opted out,” has difficulty focusing on what you are saying (because it is hard for him to focus on *any* particular issue)
  - 3. ▶ is one who has entirely “stepped out of society”

- a. ▶ (is, granted, characterizing”)
- b. ▶ is a fellow who finds it difficult to speak in much more than monosyllabic terms on *any* subject
- c. ▶ is really not interested very much
- d. ▶ gives you the impression that he considers you representative of the whole bourgeois technological scientific situation—perhaps even a member of the “military industrial complex”—and therefore not really worth dealing with in matters like this.
- e. ▶ What is worse, he considers you to be “naturally religious” (*you* need religion, he does *not*)
  - i. ▶ “That’s *your* bag, but it isn’t *my* bag.”
  - ii. ▶ (remember, is an *extreme* case)
  - iii. ▶ is the kind of person who says he doesn’t need to consider the case for Christianity at all, because “religion is a matter of æsthetics”
  - iv. ▶ thinks that some people are moved by religion and others are not, and that if he doesn’t happen to be moved by it, he doesn’t need to bother with it

#### VI. ▶ **Inescapable Decisions**

- A. ▶ My strong suggestion: when dealing with people like this is to use—in slightly modified form—the fundamental technique that we talked about previously—namely, to show him that what he has to do to survive in ordinary life will vindicate Christianity when applied to the religious question.
  - 1. ▶ modification is this: What he must do in ordinary life requires him to make decisions, and these decisions are life decisions. He cannot, therefore, escape making a religious decision simply because he thinks that it is superfluous.
- B. ▶ existentialists have emphasized that nobody gets out of “making decisions”
  - 1. ▶ Everyone *has* to make decisions—even the person who “puts things off,” will not face issues.
    - a. ▶ is actually making as many decisions as the person who realizes that he is doing so
    - b. ▶ person who decides *not* to make a decision, has, of course, made one (has made a decision not to make a decision—and that also is a decision!
  - 2. ▶ need to help this person see that, even though he has opted out of “bourgeois society,” he has *not* opted out of decision-making, nor has he opted out of life decision-making.

#### VII. ▶ **No Exceptions in Life**

- A. ▶ Every time he jumps on his Honda, he is *making a decision*.
  - 1. ▶ and that decision is based on probability evidence that the thing won’t blow up, for example.
- B. ▶ Every time he crosses the street, he does it in exactly the same way that the “bourgeois” person does—*he looks both ways* in order to be sure he won’t be flattened.

1. ▶ Even when a person says, “I don’t care about objectivity, I don’t care about knowledge, I don’t care about facts, this is the way I look at the world,” he *still looks both ways* before he crosses the street!
2. ▶ does *not* expect that the world out there in the realm of traffic is somehow determined by his own “bag” or his own perspective
  - a. ▶ fully recognizes that the machines coming along in the street have an objectivity that has no bearing whatever on his own personal interest, and the clear evidence that he recognizes this is that he doesn’t just whirl around and dash out into the street in a mystical stupor—or if he does, he doesn’t have a chance to make any further decisions!
  - b. ▶ realizes that this is a life-or-death decision for him—just as it is for everybody else. And he goes about making the proper decision the same way everybody else does.

### VIII. ▶ **Decisions Are Universal**

- A. ▶ By use of analogies like this, you can help the person to see that decision-making on the basis of evidence is *not* “bourgeois.”
  1. ▶ finally has *no* political, social, or economic qualities connected with it whatsoever
  2. ▶ happens to be a necessity for *all* human beings
  3. ▶ makes *no* difference what “philosophy of life” a person maintains
  4. ▶ *He* has to make decisions constantly on the basis of evidence, and *all* people do this in the very same way.
- B. ▶ Solipscist: “There *is no world* out there!”
  1. ▶ nevertheless, he too evaluates evidence (e.g., whether he will eat food or cardboard)
  2. ▶ comes to this decision using evidence—the same evidence that anybody else uses
- C. ▶ story of the Christian Scientist who maintains that “. . . there *is no evil or pain*
  1. ▶ are only the *illusions* of evil or pain
  2. ▶ once, when leaning over, her friend stuck her in the *derriere* with a hat pin
    - a. ▶ and she leaped into the air with a shriek
    - b. ▶ said, “I will admit that the illusion of pain is as bad as I suppose real pain would have been!”
    - c. ▶ But if you have to predicate everything of the *illusion* that you would of the reality, you’ve gained nothing at all by calling it “an illusion!”

### IX. ▶ **Universal Decision-Making**

- A. ▶ is exactly the situation with the person who says, “I don’t have to worry about objectivity; it’s a question of ‘my bag.’”
  1. ▶ In ordinary life, *he* makes decisions the same way everyone else makes them.
  2. ▶ means his claims turn out to be nothing but “verbalizing”
    - a. ▶ world is still objectively *there*
    - b. ▶ makes not a particle of difference whether a person considers himself a hippie *or* a member of the “military-industrial complex”

- c. ▶ The way of decision-making turns out to be exactly the same.
- B. ▶ *If* you can get the person to see that he really has to evaluate evidence, has to make “life-or-death” decisions all the time, then you can say . . .
  - 1. ▶ “The very way in which you make *those* decisions all the time is all we’re asking for in considering the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”
    - a. ▶ He Himself said that if you make the wrong decision relative to Him, reject Him, you are stacking up for yourself the worse conceivable life—both here and in eternity.”
    - b. ▶ “So it behooves you to *do* something about this, about Him.”
  - 2. ▶ can shift to a bit of “law-preachment” to get the person to at least consider what Christ has to offer
  - 3. ▶ claims of Christ are set forth in the primary documents (the Gospel records) are *testable*
    - a. ▶ are testable in the same way as the question of crossing the street or deciding what to eat
    - b. ▶ are *not* questions off in some “mystical realm”
    - c. ▶ Christianity does *not* ask of you anything different from what you have to do in your ordinary, daily experience.

#### X. ▶ **The Realm of Preachment**

- A. ▶ I admit that many of the people who have opted out in the “low-level tender-minded” fashion are *not really interested* in argument or evidence at all.
  - 1. ▶ Theirs is a problem of *interest* more than anything else.
  - 2. ▶ if person says, “O.K., the traffic is really there—but I still don’t care a hang about Christianity,” you are no longer in the realm of apologetics.
    - a. ▶ person at the point of willfully refusing to face the facts
    - b. ▶ puts you more in the realm of *preachment* than of apologetics, need to preach God’s law with the utmost severity
      - i. ▶ person is imperiling his immortal soul so long as he “play around” with this kind of neglect
- B. ▶ Phil. 2:10-11
  - 1. ▶ “. . . that at the Name of Jesus *every* knee shall bow, . . . and *every* tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”
  - 2. ▶ Scripture makes it clear that that *everybody*—whether he likes it or not— is going to come to terms with Jesus Christ sooner or later.
    - a. ▶ is *not* a question of *whether* or not, but only a question of *when*
    - b. ▶ issue: whether a man is going to come to terms with Christ *now* (when he can do so to his eternal salvation), or whether he will be *forced* to his knees later (to his eternal loss)
  - 3. ▶ Don’t be afraid to use verses of this kind with people who show that they don’t care enough to face the issue.
    - a. ▶ Apologetics by itself can’t create an interest in apologetics.

- b. ▶ It is *not* a field that “produces motivation,” but one that *does* provide evidence.
- c. ▶ means that if a person’s problem is motivation only, then the only way to deal with it is in terms of the preachings that Scripture sets forth.

#### XI. ▶ **The Higher-Level Tender-Minded**

- A. ▶ Now let’s look at what I call the “higher-level tender-minded.”
- B. ▶ Here we are in a quite different realm.
  - 1. ▶ e.g., a person who is aesthetically sensitive, whose concerns have always been with art & literature and with personal satisfaction in a higher sense—but *not* primarily with issues of truth or falsity.
  - 2. ▶ You will immediately think of students you know in the field of literature or the fine arts
    - a. ▶ have a high degree of sensitivity & concern for what is moving & real (in the sense of “touching man at his roots”) [but]
      - i. ▶ not much concern for truth-over-against-error in the objective, scientific, technical sense
    - b. ▶ don’t find in conversation with them that they are cavalier with regard to objectivity [but]
    - c. ▶ is just that scientific or historical evidence does not “touch them where they live,” does not “move them” at the point of their deepest concerns
- C. ▶ Question: Is there any way to get to these people at their point of concern *without* slipping into a subjectivism which reduces Christianity to the level of religions that have no objective evidence?

#### XII. ▶ **Solving the Feelings Problem**

- A. ▶ A lot of work has been done in this area in our own century.
  - 1. ▶ work has *not* taken place entirely within the framework of Christian scholarship
  - 2. ▶ Avenues toward the resolution of this problem have been created as a sideline by non-Christian scholars who were actually working on other problems.
- B. ▶ begin quite some distance from Christianity: the work of Carl Gustav Jung
  - 1. ▶ Jung represents one of the three main streams of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century.
  - 2. ▶ began as a student & associate of Sigmund Freud in Vienna (early years of 20th century)
    - a. ▶ broke with Freud (Jung found Freud’s 2 all-embracing principles of *libido* and *mortido* somewhat suffocating.)
  - 3. ▶ attempting to handle all of man’s psychic life in terms of (1) materialistic factors and (2) a limited number of principles, was, in Jung’s opinion, a very unsophisticated and unrealistic way of taking care of the problems.
    - a. ▶ developed in its place a much more all-embracing and fascinating system
    - b. ▶ essence: Man’s psychic life has certain basic symbols that comprise it.

### XIII. ▶ **The Symbols of Life**

- A. ▶ are not limited to one individual, nor are they limited to one culture
- B. ▶ is a “universal body” of symbols present in man’s psychic life, and they represent man’s deepest needs
  - 1. ▶ Jung called these symbols “archetypes” (or fundamental types).
- C. ▶ How did Jung discover this?
  - 1. ▶ by his analytic sessions with his own contemporaries [but also]
  - 2. ▶ through a careful investigation of traditional literature—the kind of literature that “bubbles up” from the unconscious
  - 3. ▶ Jung studied occultic literature in great detail.
    - a. ▶ example: when Jung investigated medieval alchemical manuscripts, he found that the symbols which appeared in these drawings were the *same* symbols that Zurich businessmen talked about in their dream-life.
      - i. ▶ From the medieval alchemist to the modern Zurich businessman, the symbols remain basically the same!
      - ii. ▶ (Jung also found the same archetypical symbols appearing in Chinese astrological material.)
- D. ▶ Jung’s conclusion:
  - 1. ▶ is a fundamental and universal set of images or symbols that are fundamental to man’s psychic life: the “archetypes of the collective unconscious”
  - 2. ▶ means “the unconscious” is *not* the individual only; there is such a thing as the “collective unconscious”
    - a. ▶ is as if the psychic life of man “inter-locks”
    - b. ▶ means one man’s psychic life draws from the “common pool” in which everyone participates

### XIV. ▶ **Universal Symbols**

- A. ▶ What *are* some of these symbols?
  - 1. ▶ symbol of the “old man” (generally pictured with a white beard and a long robe—a kind of Santa Claus figure, if you will)
    - a. ▶ in fact, Santa Claus turns out to *be* one of the reflections of that archetype [for]
    - b. ▶ Santa Claus is *not limited* to one particular tradition (no matter where you go, at least in the Indo-European world, you find Santa Claus appearing under different guises (Pere Noël, St. Nicholas, etc.)
    - c. ▶ the father symbol, the father image, who comes and gives gifts to man
  - 2. ▶ symbol of the old woman, the witch
    - a. ▶ introduces evil & misery— often through trickery
    - b. ▶ example: often there is the prince who frequently saves the princess from some agony or difficulty caused by the witch
  - 3. ▶ For Jung there were particular archetypes that symbolized *man’s need for healing*
    - a. ▶ Jung: When you look at man’s psychic life, you find that man is *fractured*, has a *disjunction*

- b. ▶ object of man's psychic quest is to reconcile opposites, to bring wholeness (Jung: "the conjunction of opposites" describes man's desire to heal the cleavage within his very being.)
- c. ▶ is a universal conviction that there *is* such a cleavage, and that it needs healing
- d. ▶ is a universal quest to bring wholeness to one's psychic life [and] there are certain symbols that reflect the desire for conjunction

#### XV. ▶ **The Symbol of the Cross**

- A. ▶ most important of all symbols is the symbol of the cross
  - 1. ▶ is *not* by any means limited to Christianity
  - 2. ▶ If you study comparative religions, you already know that the cross symbol is widely distributed, as is the snake symbol (often *in conjunction with* the cross)
    - a. ▶ When your local physician displays the *caduceus*, it is a cross with a serpent entwined around it.
    - b. ▶ concept goes back to hoary Greek antiquity as a medical symbol of healing
      - i. ▶ (it did *not* come at all from the O.T.)
    - c. ▶ yet O.T. talks about Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, so that when people looked on the serpent they would be healed.
    - d. ▶ Jesus makes a direct parallel between this and His own death for the sins of the world.
      - i. ▶ "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:14,15).
- B. ▶ idea of the snake as a healing symbol and the cross as a healing symbol turns up in the unconscious life of man with remarkable regularity, and is *not* adequately explained by cultural borrowing.

#### XVI. ▶ **Mircea Eliade**

- A. ▶ work of another scholar of the 20th century: M. Eliade
  - 1. ▶ of Hungarian origin, but spent a good part of his career in France (his early writings were done in French; most have been translated into English)
  - 2. ▶ came to the U.S., taught at the Univ. of Chicago
- B. ▶ is seen by many as the greatest religious phenomenologist in the world
  - 1. ▶ that is, an in-depth religious sociologist
  - 2. ▶ his most famous work: *The Myth of the Eternal Return*
  - 3. ▶ is conceivable [!] that a person in the [superficial?] field of sociology *could* penetrate below the level of "statistics," to something of a bit more profundity—and Eliade has definitely done this.
- C. ▶ Eliade tries to "get at the root" or religious phenomena, tries to find out the fundamental informing ideas, root principles & concepts that result in religious practice.
  - 1. ▶ doesn't just "watch Ubangis eating each other," but asks, "*Why* do they eat each other?"

- 2. ▶ tries to cut through to the fundamental notions at the root of their ideology
- 3. ▶ He is very much in the European tradition in this regard.
  - a. ▶ There, sociology has *not* been just a statistical, descriptive kind of thing but more of a philosophical and psychological operation.
  - b. ▶ *don't* “watch rats jumping across grids in a cage” (cf. sociology in America)
- D. ▶ In investigating primitive religions, Eliade has come very largely to the same conclusion that Jung reached by (1) examining people’s psychic life and (2) by looking at occult literature.
  - 1. ▶ *are* fundamental root ideas that inform religious tradition
  - 2. ▶ Eliade, too, talks about the “conjunction of opposites” and the effort to heal this disjunction within the self.
  - 3. ▶ notes that this is done particularly through symbolic forms

#### XVII. ▶ **The Lessons of Folklore**

- A. ▶ In this area we note the work of Stith-Thompson
  - 1. ▶ is head of the Dept. of Folklore at the Univ. of Indiana (the center of folklore studies for a generation in the U.S.)
  - 2. ▶ His multi-volume *Motif Index to Folk Literature* is the basic reference work in the field of folklore.
    - a. ▶ is still being written, indexes motifs that appear in folk tales
- B. ▶ Folk tales have a common series of motifs (you know this from your childhood).
  - 1. ▶ involve elves & dwarfs, dragons and goblins, princes and princesses, and old witches and kings
    - a. ▶ is, in other words, a common body of fundamental concepts in folklore
  - 2. ▶ By indexing the folk tales of the world, Stith-Thompson and his associates bring out the similarities among these tales.
  - 3. ▶ They, too, find that there is apparently “a universal symbolic body of psychic data.”

#### XVIII. ▶ **Up From the Conscious**

- A. ▶ is *not* what we would naturally expect, since folk tales “bubble up” from the unconscious
  - 1. ▶ (primitive man did *not* just sit down and decide to write folk tales!)
- B. ▶ Stith-Thompson discovered the same kind of phenomenon that Jung & Eliade did.
  - 1. ▶ namely, that folk tales did *not* arise by any sort of conscious invention
  - 2. ▶ Father Unbangi did not ask Son Ubangi, “What do you want to be when you grow up, Son?” and the son reply, “I want to be the author of folk literature.”
    - a. ▶ people do *not* consciously choose to “go into folklore” as an occupation
    - b. ▶ Folk tales “bubble up.”
      - i. ▶ one person tells a bit of a story, later there is an expansion on it
      - ii. ▶ gradually these tales develop [and]
      - iii. ▶ of course, they reflect the fundamental in-depth needs & interests of the people who are contributing to them

- C. ▶ As we analyze these common symbols—the archetypes, the imagery in folk tales, the concepts that appear in occult literature—we discover that they are saying something remarkably familiar.

#### XIX. ▶ **Sleeping Beauty**

- A. ▶ A beautiful princess is subject to a prophecy which says that one day (generally on her twenty-first birthday) an old witch will get at her and will successfully give her something that will put her into a deathlike sleep.
  - 1. ▶ way in which this is done varies from story to story
    - a. ▶ sometimes old witch pricks her with a needle
    - b. ▶ more often it's a matter of giving her something to eat (such as an apple) which she accepts
  - 2. ▶ result: she falls into a deathlike sleep
  - 3. ▶ naturally mother & father (the king & queen) do everything they can to prevent this from happening [but]
  - 4. ▶ whole prophecy comes about just as predicted: as the princess eats the fruit, she falls into a deathlike trance
  - 5. ▶ everything in the castle stops:
    - a. ▶ servants who carry food stop in mid-passage
    - b. ▶ whole activity of the castle grinds to a halt
    - c. ▶ nettles & brambles grow up around the castle, place becomes a state of living death
- B. ▶ But there is another prophecy: someday a prince will come
  - 1. ▶ sure enough, he *does* come
  - 2. ▶ in some versions, the brambles melt before him; in others, he is the only one who is able to cut these down & get into the castle
  - 3. ▶ prince gets in, sees the princess and gives her the kiss of love
  - 4. ▶ she is raised up and the whole castle comes alive again
  - 5. ▶ is followed by the marriage of the prince & the princess [and]
  - 6. ▶ they live happily ever after.

#### XX. ▶ **The Basic Gospel Story**

- A. ▶ Haven't we heard something like this before? Doesn't this have a strangely familiar ring to it?
- B. ▶ is an analogy of the Gospel story—and it is *not accidental that it should be so*.
  - 1. ▶ princess is the human race, successfully tempted by the devil (the old witch)
  - 2. ▶ as result, death falls not only upon the person who eats the fruit, but on the entire environment (“The whole creation groaneth in travail . . .”—Rom. 8)
  - 3. ▶ no help is available from within the castle; help has to come *from outside the castle*
  - 4. ▶ when the prince comes by prophecy, he is able to raise up the princess by love
  - 5. ▶ then comes the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when Christ marries the church [and]

- 6. ▶ they live happily ever after in the kingdom.
- C. ▶ If you analyze folk tales, you discover that this kind of very close analogy occurs again and again and again.
  - 1. ▶ Why? Because there is a fundamental psychic life, a collective unconscious, which expresses the fundamental human need.
  - 2. ▶ means that inner life is *not* as individualistic as it often appears. Inner life is actually a “participating” sort of thing.
    - a. ▶ “Ask not for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.” (J. Donne)
    - b. ▶ means the needs of the individual reach far beyond himself; they spread “across the board” so that people participate in them wherever they are.
- D. ▶ If this is actually the case, there must be some way of testing it out, and this method of testing could well be the attempt to produce modern folk tales that have the same fundamental motif in them.
  - 1. ▶ If this were done sensitively, particularly by Christians who were concerned to get the Gospel across on a deep level, people would respond on a level far deeper than that of rational cognition.
  - 2. ▶ such stories would hit people on a “gut level” which would be far greater than the ordinary.

XXI. ▶ **The Inklings**

- A. ▶ is precisely what a school of Christian writers has done in our time
  - 1. ▶ school usually called “the Inklings”
  - 2. ▶ focuses on 2 writers in particular: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien
    - a. ▶ were Christians
    - b. ▶ endeavored to do modern folk tales which would carry the same kind of impact as the traditional folk tales
- B. ▶ If such tales would have the impact which they hoped for, then the result of this would be a confirmation of the notion that there is a common psychic life, and that this common psychic life is pushing toward the Christian answer.
- C. ▶ “Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” -- St. Augustine, *The Confessions*
  - 1. ▶ (meaning: the heart of every man can *only* be satisfied finally by the true God—the God who reveals Himself in Jesus Christ).

XXII. ▶ **The Cross-Shaped Piece**

- A. ▶ Think of man’s heart as a picture puzzle— but with one piece missing.
  - 1. ▶ if all the other piece already in place, you know the shape of the missing piece
  - 2. ▶ What Augustine was saying is that if a person puts together the pieces of his inner life sensitively and properly, the missing piece will have the shape of the cross.
- B. ▶ is precisely what derives from the kind of work that Eliade and Stith-Thompson have carried out

1. ▶ All people are in need of the same thing, all people want to get the “opposites” in their personality brought together.
2. ▶ The way to get them together is by way of the cross.
3. ▶ People intuit this even though they have never been in contact with the historic Christian faith.
4. ▶ follows that if we are able to confirm that this kind of intuition goes on, then when we are dealing with the “higher-level tender-minded,” we can offer such literature to them.
5. ▶ can expect that, in their reading such literature, the person will recognize his psychic need and will recognize that the answer to such needs is finally provided only by the Gospel (to which his inner life & the literature he reads point as analogy)

### XXIII. ▶ **The Narnian Chronicles**

- A. ▶ C. S. Lewis wrote a series of seven books for children: *The Narnian Chronicles*.
- B. ▶ are set in a mythical land, and the characters & images of traditional folklore are employed
- C. ▶ Gospel story is woven through the Narnian books
  1. ▶ provide a sort of test of this theory
- D. ▶ Sensitive children who read the *Narnian Chronicles* are moved on a level far deeper than the level of straight rationality.
  1. ▶ appreciate the stories for their excitement, their external characteristics [but]
  2. ▶ there is something about these stories that gets at the deepest level.
  3. ▶ even find that a sensitive child reacts even more profoundly to these than a child does to traditional folk tales
    - a. ▶ When a tale like “Sleeping Beauty” is first told to a really sensitive child, he will actually weep at the point in the story where the prince kisses the princess and everything comes out right.
    - b. ▶ child will say, “If only this were real, if only this really happened!”
      - i. ▶ is actually an expression of the desperate desire of the human heart to have this kind of thing take place in reality

### XXIV. ▶ **The Lord of the Rings**

- A. ▶ J. R. R. Tolkien did something even *more* profound.
- B. ▶ His work is perhaps the most important single literary work of our century.
  1. ▶ may well be that *The Lord of the Rings* will eventually have a place in world literature similar to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*
  2. ▶ is that kind of magnificent, sweeping work done with incredible genius
- C. ▶ *The Lord of the Rings* is a three-volume mythical novel which employs folklore motifs.
  1. ▶ Adults read it and are “grabbed by it”—even though they don’t know exactly why.
  2. ▶ The books become “more real” to them than their ordinary experience.
- D. ▶ What happened when *The Lord of the Rings* was first published:

1. ▶ Many student just *thrown* by the story, were more interested in Middle Earth than in ordinary experience!
2. ▶ posters cropped up everywhere, proclaiming “Come to Middle Earth!”
3. ▶ Tolkien societies arose.
4. ▶ was a time of national election, buttons appeared that read . . .
  - a. ▶ “Elect your local Hobbit “[or]
  - b. ▶ “Vote for Gandalf” (Gandalf is the father figure, the “God the Father” or O.T. prophet figure) [or]
  - c. ▶ “Gandalf for President!”
- E. ▶ What does all this tell us?
  1. ▶ that the only way to really take care of our problems is to somehow have this story become “real”
  2. ▶ If only we could have a “Gandalf” instead of some greasy politician in charge.
  3. ▶ Here is Plato’s longing for the Philosopher-King—but extended to the deepest level.
  4. ▶ How is it that this material “gets to” people the way it does?
    - a. ▶ because it really reflects their deepest needs [and]
    - b. ▶ because it is an analogy that points to Christ
    - c. ▶ is “pre-evangelism,” a *proto-evangelium* that points to the Gospel

## XXV. ▶ **The Gospel Story**

- A. ▶ Tolkein has expressed this in an “Essay on Fairy Stories”— an essay that describes the theoretical foundation for all of this.
  1. ▶ pertinent paragraphs quotes:
    - a. ▶ “The Gospels contain a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy stories. They contain many marvels, peculiarly artistic, beautiful and moving, “mythical,” in their perfect self-contained significance, and at the same time powerfully symbolic and allegorical, and among the marvels and the gospel stories is the greatest, most complete conceivable eucatastrophe: The birth of Christ.
 

Christ is the *eucatastrophe* [Tolkien’s term for an experience we would want repeated forever] of man’s history. The resurrection is the *eucatastrophe* of the story of the incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy.... It has preeminently the inner consistency of reality. There is no tale ever told that men would rather find was true and one which so many skeptical men have accepted as true on its own merits, for the art of it has the supremely convincing tone of primary art that is of creation. To reject it leads either to sadness or to wrath.”
    - b. ▶ If a person finally *does* come upon a story that hits him at the deepest level of human need, to reject that inevitably will lead to sadness or to wrath.
      - i. ▶ Look at the effect of Jesus on His contemporaries. It was exactly *that!*

- ii. ▶ People who did *not* accept Jesus either (1) crucified Him in wrath, or, (2) like the rich young ruler, went away sorrowful, knowing that they had rejected the One Thing that would give them life.
2. ▶ Tolkein continues . . .
- a. ▶ It is not difficult to imagine the peculiar excitement and joy that one would feel if any especially beautiful fairy story were found to be primarily true – its narrative to be history, without thereby losing the mythical or allegorical significance that it had possessed. The joy would have exactly the same quality, if not the same degree, as the joy which the turn in a fairy story gives. Such has the very taste of primary truth. It looks forward or backward—the direction in this regard is unimportant—to the great *eucaastrophe*, just as the Old Testament prophets looked ahead and we look back.

The direction makes no difference, whether these are fairy tales of early times or modern, literary fairy tales makes no difference. They look forward or backward at the great *eucaastrophe*. The Christian joy, the *gloria* is of the same kind, but it is preeminently (infinitely, if our capacity were not finite) high and joyous, because this story is supreme and it is true; art has been verified. God is the Lord—of angels and of men and of elves. Legend and history have met and fused.

- b. ▶ Tolkein saying that *what we want is to have fairy tales come true*.
- c. ▶ In the case of the Gospel story, you have the summation of all of the characteristics of the very best fairy tales, but *it is true—it really did happen!*
  - i. ▶ not “once upon a time . . .” [but]
  - ii. ▶ “. . . in the days of Caesar Augustus, when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria!”
    - (1). ▶ In other words, the Gospel happened in objective and real history.
    - (2). ▶ Here we have the fairy story *par excellence*—the greatest of all fairy tales—but one that turns out to have really occurred.
    - (3). ▶ Thus all the fairy stories of the world point to the Gospel and find their fulfillment in it!
  - iii. ▶ “God is the Lord of angels and of men and of elves. Legend and history have met and fused. Art has been verified.”

## XXVI. ▶ **The Hunger for Verification**

- A. ▶ “higher-level tender minded” person *wants art to be verified*
  - 1. ▶ though primary interest is in art, he is interested *not* just in subjective feelings but also with what is the deepest & most significant artistic *truth*
  - 2. ▶ can put into his hands *The Narnian Chronicles, The Lord of the Rings* & other literature of that sort
    - a. ▶ will in these be drawn to the express fulfillment of his deepest artistic needs in the story of the Gospel

- B. ▶ are dealing here with the *inner life* of man
  - 1. ▶ dealing with exactly the area of need that the “tender-minded” person has
  - 2. ▶ are *not* dealing in some kind of individualistic subjectivism
  - 3. ▶ instead, are showing that there is an *objective* answer in the psychic life
    - a. ▶ psychic life *does* have an objective kind of substance to it [and]
    - b. ▶ is unreasonable to accept “any old subjective answer”
  - 4. ▶ The acceptable subjective answer must accord with the needs that “bubble up” universally.
    - a. ▶ Those needs coordinate precisely with the Gospel story.
    - b. ▶ *is* a way of introducing objectivity into the realm of subjectivity!
- C. ▶ “But couldn’t the person say that the Gospel story is just a ‘better fairy tale’ than all the rest, get out from under it that way?”
  - 1. ▶ think of all the people (e.g., liberal theologians, clergy) who have claimed that the Gospel story was a fairy tale, a myth (in that sense of the word)
  - 2. ▶ Yes, a person *can* present that objection.
    - a. ▶ But the minute he does, he leaves the category of the “tender-minded” back into the “tough-minded”—and you’ve got an answer for that!
    - b. ▶ (that is, the NT documents are solidly historical, events that they describe really occurred as objective fact)
  - 3. ▶ Now the Gospel story becomes verified on 2 levels:
    - a. ▶ on the objective level of history [and]
    - b. ▶ on the subjective level of common psychic need