

# **“Knowing as Unlocking the World”**

## **A Review Essay on E. L. Meek’s *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People***

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ABSTRACT Key Words: Polanyi, tragedy and knowledge, Enlightenment, evil, sin, integration, scripture, knowledge and submission, CS Lewis, deductive reasoning, inclusive, exclusivism.

*This review essay begins by describing why one should read Esther Meek’s Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People (Brazos Press, 2003), then raises questions about the absence of tragedy in her view of knowledge; how ordinary knowledge of things differs from knowledge of God; whether one can “prove” the Messianic nature of Jesus; and whether Meek’s inclusive epistemology can support an exclusivistic soteriology.*

Esther Meek’s *Longing to Know* is a delightful book for readers who appreciate authors with humor, competence, *chutzpah*, and a solicitous concern for them — the reader. Meek has written a helpful guide for those with doubts about the possibility of knowing the truth — especially those Christians with doubts about the possibility of knowing God. She has also written the most helpful introduction to the central features of Michael Polanyi’s work since Richard Gelwick’s *The Way of Discovery*, published almost thirty years ago.<sup>1</sup> Since Dale Cannon has written a thorough description of Meek’s book for this same occasion,<sup>2</sup> I will select a few issues on which I think further comment is necessary, without attempting an exhaustive analysis of her argument. Let me begin with a confession that I am a fan, and tell you why you would profit from reading *Longing to Know*.

### **Why You Should Read this Book**

Meek’s desire to communicate engagingly to a lay audience is unusual in contemporary scholarship, and we can be grateful for her success.<sup>3</sup> She begins where she intuits her audience is, in the middle of a confusing mixture of assured feelings and nagging doubts about its beliefs, and Meek deftly recounts how our culture has arrived at this unfortunate juncture. The underlying problem, she avers, is our modern obsession with *certainty*: for a belief to be true, it must take the form of a statement that can never be doubted, one that is absolutely clear and explicit in what it asserts (Ch. 3). Such an obsession has rendered it all but impossible to claim to know moral convictions, aesthetic judgments, religious beliefs, historical assertions, or most of the everyday claims that give both structure and point to human lives. Believing that people have been misled down the path of absolute certainty, she shows how an attention to ordinary knowing will help people to *know* truth, to be *confident* in that truth, and by knowing it to *transform* their thinking and living. She aims to reassure people in the acts of knowing they already perform, every day, and to suggest by stages that such knowledge is a doorway to the most profound philosophical and religious truths. By organizing each of her twenty-five short chapters in a similar way, and supplying topics at the end of each chapter for “Further Thought and Discussion,” she makes it easy for those not familiar with terms like “epistemology,” “infallibility,” or “post-modernism” to navigate the book.<sup>4</sup> The Polyanian definition which unites her chapters is a shrewd summary of his central concepts: “Knowing is the

responsible human struggle to rely on clues to focus on a coherent pattern and submit to its reality.” Taking each part of this rubric in turn, she unpacks its constituent parts and implications, repeating central terms and phrases until the reader can finally say, “Oh, I see it!”, and share Meek’s confidence.

Esther Meek is wonderfully inventive in conveying her ideas in fresh ways that are far removed from the sterility of academic jargon: “We’re no longer wearing an epistemological straitjacket; we’re wearing an epistemological leotard” (55) – a metaphor a male scholar might never have imagined. Or, “Our coherent pattern corresponds to the real as a key does to a door, not as a photograph does to its subject.” (141) Or, “I personally have felt the lovely resolution of reuniting the ivory tower with the world of everyday human experience, seeing the jewels of the one return to the streets of the other, where they belong” (185). Or, in a typically provocative sentence: “We can profitably compare the act of knowing to a wedding ceremony” (177). Faithful to her subtitle, she draws her examples from gardening, auto mechanics, throwing a frisbee, watching movies and listening to music, studying Magic Eye 3-D pictures, breast-feeding, her husband’s prostate cancer, making bread, and many others, equally quotidian. And one never has the feeling that Meek is talking down to you, that this “ordinary” style is a condescension. She shows the awareness and patience of an experienced teacher who has taken the time to actually notice what students are interested in, and how they learn best. *Longing to Know* can be read as a kind of sampler of good teaching practice, and everyone interested in education could benefit from reading its eloquent pages. I will use this book with students, and recommend it to adult church classes, for whom it seems especially well suited.

### **Some Issues that Invite Further Reflection**

Though I am a fan of the book and urge you to read it, there are a few pages that did not feel entirely right, where I found myself searching for other integrations of the clues Meek offered. By and large, these questions arose not with her straightforward explication of Polanyian concepts, which I thought she handled well, but with concepts at the margins of her philosophical analysis, or passages having to do with the application of these views on knowing to theology. While I know my present audience is not interested in focusing solely on theological issues, some of them may lead us back to important observations about Meek’s appropriation of Polanyi. Let me begin with what she acknowledges is often a stumbling block to confident faith in God, the problem of evil.

**The Tragedy of Knowledge.** In his well-known history of modern Christian thought, James Livingston names *optimism* and *a belief in progress* two of the distinguishing marks of the eighteenth century Enlightenment.<sup>5</sup> The “light” of reason promised to shine on all of the old superstitions and ignorances of humanity, leaving nothing but firm knowledge and happiness. With this new knowledge humanity could finally banish the scourges of disease, prejudice, slavery, and cruelty, leading the world to a light-filled future of order, peace, and prosperity. Since the contemporary economic and political philosophies of the west had their origins in the Enlightenment, and since the seemingly limitless resources of the new American continent supplied all the raw materials necessary to put these dreams into practice, it is little wonder that modern western thought has remained thoroughly optimistic, right up to recent years.

And yet, one of the minor chords in the western symphony is a reminder that when humans come into knowledge, they lose their innocence, and often enter into tragedy, into suffering. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (c.1700 bce), Enkidu gains wisdom and the “thoughts of a man” in his heart, and so loses his closeness with

nature and the creatures who had been his companions.<sup>6</sup> A few centuries later, in *Genesis 2* and *3*, man and woman follow the advice of “the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made,” ate of the fruit, and their eyes are opened, and they gain knowledge of good and evil.<sup>7</sup> But the gain in knowledge also brings about their downfall, from companionship with God to exile and suffering. A few centuries later, Sophocles tells how the Chorus of *Oedipus the King* begs the king not to insist on knowing his past, not to learn who he really is. But he demands to know, and brings judgment crashing down on his head: “Oedipus, damned in his birth, in his marriage damned,/ Damned in the blood he shed with his own hand!”<sup>8</sup> A few centuries later, the apostle Paul contrasts “the wisdom of the world” with “the folly of the cross,” declaring that “God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom” (I Cor. 1.25), as human wisdom leads only to death. And many centuries later, the lesson is learned again as Dr. Faustus gives up his soul and eternal happiness for knowledge of the world, in Goethe’s shadow-filled play. And finally, we might note an occasion from July, 1945, on the deserts of New Mexico, when humans exploded the first nuclear device and Robert Oppenheimer, the leader of that effort, recalled at that moment the words of the Bhagavad-Gita: “We have become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”<sup>9</sup>

One lesson that could be drawn from this minor theme that winds through western thought is that any talk of knowledge that leaves the “messiness” of the human knower behind, that forgets the “foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart” when it talks of knowledge, is not true to the deepest levels of our cultural experience. Enlightenment canons of reason elevated a discarnate Mind as the arbiter of knowledge, an objective Rationality from which all mistake, all error, had been eliminated. By following the scientific method carefully, it was believed, one could achieve certain knowledge without any shadows, without any pain, anguish, or guilt. Michael Polanyi showed how wrongheaded and confused the ideal of complete objectivity was, and how impossible it is to separate the knower from her knowledge. This understanding Meek captures in *Longing to Know*, and captures well. I do not find, however, a sense of the tragic in her view of knowledge, and I wonder if here she hasn’t been *too* faithful to Polanyi, for we don’t find it there, either! One of the fascinating things about Polanyi, given his roots in central European Judaism and the way that Hitler’s war against the Jews affected his family, is that he says little about how great knowledge does not guarantee morality, or even simple decency. I have read his letters in the Chicago archives to relatives trying desperately to escape Germany, as Michael tried to help them get the necessary papers and contacts to come to England. He certainly lived the tragedy of the Holocaust in a way that most of us cannot imagine. And yet, he was a scientist, and his thought continued to focus on the possibilities of knowledge with minimal attention to its entanglement in moral issues.<sup>10</sup> If part of the horrors of modern forms of evil is traceable to an obsession with a technical rationality divorced from moral roots, must not epistemology reflect on those roots?

In *Longing to Know*, the closest Meek comes to examining how knowledge might be related to evil is in a chapter called “Getting it Wrong” (ch. 20), and in her closing chapter, “Known by God” (ch. 25). The primary word she uses to describe ‘getting knowing wrong’ in the earlier chapter is “mistake,” and she doesn’t raise the issue to the general philosophical level of asking “Is knowledge always a good thing?” When society is faced today with decisions about genetic engineering, about privacy in the digital age, about developing new biological and chemical weapons to keep ahead of terrorists, it seems important to me to ask this question, and know how to work toward an answer. On p. 195, Meek hints at some of the issues I have mentioned when she states briefly that “our knowing is warped, especially when it comes to knowing God, because of human rebellion against God.” And “another reason we make mistakes in any area of knowing is that our character is bent” (164). I would like further reflection, however, on “mistake,” “error,” “sin,” “guilt,” and “tragedy” in relation to “knowing.” We need to know more about how all our knowing – everyday, scientific, moral, artistic – might be “warped.” A final example touching my concern is provided in a quote near the end of *Longing*:

“Actually, I think God is involved not just in our knowing him, but in our knowing anything at all – auto mechanics, copperheads, golf swings, Spanish, and the Pythagorean theorem. When knowing happens and the world is truthfully engaged, God has been at work.” (196) If God is the “lure” that attracts us, that makes us long to know, then how do we **fit God** into our knowledge of Rwandan genocides, of terrorist beheadings, of the Holocaust, of the United States dropping nuclear bombs on Japanese cities – the end of a long train of sophisticated knowing? It would seem that either we must discount these things as examples of knowing, or conclude that ‘God has been at work’ in them. Meek says we are “bent,” that sin has marred our initial innocence, but according to scripture, that sin entered the human equation in an act of knowledge. I would like very much to discuss these issues further with Dr. Meek, especially given her clear sensitivity to genuine questions about faith and reason.

**Auto Mechanics “On Steroids.”** One of the most charming features of *Longing to Know* is how the author repeats, over and over like the refrain to a song, ‘Knowing God is like knowing your auto mechanic’ (74, 61, 78, 45, 112, 123, etc.). We get to know her mechanic Jeff fairly well, and this competent, trustworthy, likeable person serves as a convenient stand-in for the believer’s religious knowledge of a good and caring God. Just here, however, the theological underpinnings of Meek’s epistemology raise questions for me. If we use personal knowing of the sort that Meek has described in her book as a description of all acts of human knowing, then she would seem to have established a strong argument for a natural theology, for a general revelation that makes God accessible to the human mind, when that mind is properly understood and employed. If knowing is ‘the responsible struggle to rely on clues to focus on a coherent pattern and submit to its reality,’ then knowing God *does* become just like knowing my auto mechanic – just on a larger scale. She includes a qualifier now and then: “...integrating to the pattern of the God of scripture takes [me]...far beyond knowing my auto mechanic” (122), and “Yes, knowing God is a pattern-making that draws together every aspect of our lives. Knowing an auto mechanic is a pattern that encompasses a range of far smaller proportions” (74). Yet she never directly addresses the question of just how the two differ. By and large, Meek’s equivalency of the two patterns of knowing is quite direct, as when she continues the last sentence quoted: “But knowing God, when it comes to embodying a struggle for a coherent pattern, is no different in kind from knowing your auto mechanic” (74). Thus it appears that the integration necessary to know God is simply much, much greater, involving far more clues, than ordinary knowing, but *structurally*, the acts are identical: “It is important to see that the fact that people rely on the Bible as an authoritative guide when it comes to knowing God in no way sets knowing God apart from any other ordinary act of knowing” (105).

If I understand Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth correctly, this symmetry Meek posits between ordinary knowings and knowing God is highly suspect for Christian theology. It is precisely the Otherness of God, the hiddenness of God’s essential nature, the inscrutability of the divine, that they tried to recover from scripture (Genesis 22; Exodus 3, 19, 33; Isaiah 55). These theologians insisted that revelation is an uncovering by God, not a discovery by human beings; God initiates, while humans wait.<sup>11</sup> If knowing God is like knowing my auto mechanic *simpliciter*, then a ‘leap of faith’ is unnecessary. Esther is resolutely opposed to separating religious knowing off into a form of mysticism or intuition (pp. 41-42), and she is obviously aware of the Barthian, very Protestant way of talking of God’s special revelation, so I hope she will comment further on how knowing God is *not* like knowing your auto mechanic! This is, I believe, a profound issue for any philosophical theology, which is what Meek teaches in seminary – how far can human knowing take us in an effort to know God? She *implies*: all the way.

Clearly part of her answer will include the role of scripture, which she refers to in the quote above, and

which occupies a prominent place in her epistemology. Thus I am in effect asking also for a hermeneutics that will explain how scripture (as well as the liturgy of worship and the teachings of the Church) can serve as “clues” to God, awaiting integration by the believer, if God must remain mysterious. (It is not enough, of course, to invoke the incarnation here, for the mystery of Christ is not less than the mystery of God, despite his human form – Trinitarianism insists on this.) Given her emphasis on the compatibility of ordinary knowing with knowing God, a curiosity of Meek’s treatment of scripture in *Longing to Know* is its resolutely pre-critical, or a-critical (or is it post-critical?) stance. She speaks, for example, of John the Baptist hearing a voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, quoting Luke to supply the words he hears. In Luke’s gospel, however, it is Jesus who hears the words, not John (167-168). She refers to the story of Jesus talking with disciples on the road to Emmaus, and comments: “And think how it would have felt to realize that the one who had been expounding the Old Testament to you was the one who had written it!” (111). Here scripture has become a text outside of history, with all of its events occurring simultaneously, Jesus in the first century and also the author of the Torah. The Prologue of John’s gospel (‘the Word is God’) becomes the hermeneutic key for reading the accounts of Jesus’ life. While this is wholly orthodox Christian theology, it is unorthodox epistemology, sharpening the question of how knowing this Jesus, who is simultaneously Lord of the universe and first-century Jewish rabbi, is like knowing her auto mechanic, who remains resolutely just “Jeff.”

A more fertile, and more Polanyian, approach to scripture would be to examine the degree to which historical-critical scholarship in the mid-to-late nineteenth century reflects (unconsciously, of course) the epistemological paradigm of critical philosophy. To focus on historical criticism’s attempt to track the ‘historical Jesus’ in an effort to overcome the purely doctrinal reading of the gospels that was common in earlier generations, would be revealing. This approach elevates critical reason, privileges the “objective” historical fact above the affirmations of faith, and often makes the scientific perspective on reality definitive for interpretation (as in Bultmann’s demythologizing program). To uncover this covert Cartesianism in historical criticism would establish firmer grounds for Meek’s pre-critical use of scripture. Though not a biblical scholar, I believe that the work of Hans Frei, of literary critics of the Bible, and of canonical critics like Brevard Childs all are attempting to get beyond the limitations that have become apparent in historical criticism.<sup>12</sup> Meek’s approach would seem perfectly suited for such a task, and it would relieve some of the uneasiness her basic biblicism provokes in me.

To return to the question of this section: does reason move on the same level when knowing an auto mechanic, and when knowing God? Both are persons, in some sense, but isn’t the prevalence of symbol, metaphor, and paradox in religion a sign of a necessary shift that must occur in our thinking? Is this shift adequately captured by “integration”? On p. 110, she moves directly from her Magic Eye example of finally seeing dolphins on a formerly imageless page, to the mind-bending experience the earliest Christians must have had in recognizing the identity of Jesus: “Can you put yourself in their sandals? It makes my spine tingle to think of it! Wave after wave of understanding broke over them: It was Jesus! Jesus was alive! Dead men do rise again – if they’re divine! Jesus is the Son of God!” And she ends this chapter with: “It confirms that knowing God falls right in there with other bona fide specimens of knowing” (112). So is what happened to the disciples structurally just like what happens when we see the Magic Eye dolphins – just “bigger”? I invite Dr. Meek to say more about differences between Jeff and God, from an epistemological perspective.

**On “Proving” Jesus.** One of the elements of Meek’s revisioning of epistemology most problematic to her modern audience is undoubtedly the insistence that knowing involves submission, that “knowledge is acknowledgement:” “the human knower’s exercise of profound responsibility involves him in submitting to

the authoritative reality of the pattern he chose” (147). “It means submitting to being retaught” (146). We moderns, especially modern Americans, do not like to *submit* to anything, as the word immediately conjures up images of oppressive authority, depriving us of our absolute and total freedom. Meek conveys the eloquent Polanyian sense of commitment and calling, which moves us beyond objectivism’s avoidance of responsibility: “The technique of our redemption is to lose ourselves in the performance of an obligation which we accept, in spite of its appearing on reflection impossible of achievement. We undertake the task...because we hope to be visited by powers for which we cannot account in terms of our specifiable capabilities. This hope is a clue to God....”<sup>13</sup> Because our knowing puts us in contact with reality, a reality that will continue to surprise us in its future manifestations, the proper attitude of the knower is one of humility, of patient listening, of willingness to be led. Meek’s final chapter meditates on how an act of coming to know, “when all is said and done,” is really “*an act of coming to be known*” (192, italics in original).

Despite my admiration for the way she expresses this, Meek surprised me by moving quickly from “...to know God is to submit to him,” to an attempt to *guarantee* acknowledgement of Jesus’ identity as the Christ. Using a familiar syllogism from C.S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity*, she repeats the claim that “whatever Jesus was, he simply could not have been a great moral teacher. For Jesus repeatedly claimed to be God. We are left with three possibilities: either he is a liar, or he is a lunatic..., or he is who he claims to be – supreme Lord” (150-151). What disturbs me about this passage is not the many hermeneutical problems with this way of reading the New Testament text, nor the shallowness of Lewis’ argument, but the fact that it seems very much an attempt to prove Jesus’ divinity, an argument for God that seems to me in strong tension with her earlier insistence that Christian thought should avoid the modernist obsession with establishing truth on a foundation of rational argument: “Certainty – that fat old carrot that’s been tantalizing us for centuries – is a misguided ideal” (34). She says further that the “old model of knowing” stresses deductive reasoning, in which “you move from statements that are called premises to a statement called a conclusion. The conclusion of a deductive argument follows necessarily from the premises: if the premises are true, the conclusion has to be true also” (75). This old model, because it was touted as the only form of legitimate knowledge, has misled us, and Meek is passionate in trying to escape the limits of this model to honor the mystery of God. Yet in her use of Lewis’ argument about Jesus’ divinity – and perhaps also in her response to the theodicy problem with evidence from morality (151) – Meek seems to me to fall back into the apologetic game of attempting to “prove” God rationally.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it is simply difficult for any of us to avoid “nodding off” into critical rationality occasionally.

**Inclusive Exclusivity?** Finally, I want to comment briefly on an issue that Dale Cannon deals with more extensively in his paper, Meek’s attitude to non-Christian ways of knowing God. As indicated earlier, I think *Longing to Know* articulates, in faithfulness to Michael Polanyi, an epistemology that makes sense of knowing in religion, as in other areas of life. In this sense, her book is *inclusive*, showing how we can be confident in all sorts of acts of knowing, from auto mechanics to God. At the same time, however, she accepts the Bible telling her “that this Jesus is the only way to God, and that the only way to know Jesus is through God’s telling us about him in the Bible...What the Bible tells me makes sense of my experience that Christianity alone is different from all other futile efforts to reach God” (87). In other words, her book is *exclusivistic*, in showing that only Christian knowings are finally true and complete.

In some passages, Meek draws a very close relationship between all knowing and God, such that one concludes that for her, God is the final goal of knowing, the horizon that infuses all our knowing with meaning and future significance: “You and I both, in our words and resoundingly in our action, make statements about

God. All humans worship...something. [ellipses in the original] ...In fact, I'd like to suggest, worship is the epistemic act of making sense of the whole of our lives" (73). The structure of human knowing, which she has carefully examined and (she implies) is universal in humanity, is not dependent on cultural contexts for its essential truth, and gives her hope and confidence — it liberates her from the strait-jacket of modernist philosophy. It also leads to a recognition of a divine horizon that is the most comprehensive integration of the clues that life gives us. And yet, she abandons this structure when she turns to God, and uses scripture as her basic authority instead. We do not, at this point, understand the final stage of human knowing by examining the embodied minds of sense-making individuals, but by reading scripture in a straightforward, pre-critical way. What justifies this change?

The result of this particular scripturally-mediated epistemology is religious exclusivism: "Jesus is the only way to God." There is no effort to consider other ways of reading scripture – not just other contemporary approaches, but other ways that we find in the history of the Christian Church. The left-wing of the Reformation, for example – the Anabaptists, Mennonites, and others – became convinced that the Bible was not the 'Word of God,' but the Christ who lives in the hearts of believers is "the Word of God." This frees scriptural passages like "I am the way, the truth, and the life" from their narrow textual locus, so that the Christ who "desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2.4) is the Christ who Christians worship. This allows, of course, for a very different attitude toward peoples of other faiths — all of whom, according to the doctrine of creation, are children of the one God. Thus I think Meek owes readers an account of how a general description of knowledge ends by suddenly becoming a particularistic defense of one religion.

**A final tribute.** The questions I have raised should not obscure the very real delight I have had in reading this book. I will continue to use it and recommend it because of the soundness of its exposition of a Polanyian perspective on knowing; because of its almost perfect pedagogical pitch; and because of its passionate commitment to a confident Christian faith. Thank you, Esther; we all should do so well. Read her book!

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Richard Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery: An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> "Longing to Know If Our Knowing Really Is Knowing," by Dale Cannon. Posted on the website of The Polanyi Society at <http://www.mwsc.edu/orgs/polanyi/>.

<sup>3</sup> "...I want this book not to read like a textbook, but rather like a personal meditation." (p. 9)

<sup>4</sup> Problems for a reader are the book's lack of an Index, and the lack of notations in the text for the "Notes" Meek gives at the end of the book. It also would help, perhaps, if the book gave a few more references to Polanyi's work, for though she depends on the features of his philosophy of personal knowledge throughout the book, she only refers to his writings in the first entry under "Notes." A reader unacquainted with Polanyi would find it difficult to follow up her discussions in his work.

<sup>5</sup> James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, vol. 1: *The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997), pp. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. N.K. Sandars, rev. ed. (NY: Penguin, 1972), pp. 64-65.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 2-3, in *TANAKH: A New Translation of The Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional*

*Hebrew Text* (NY: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> Sophocles, *The Oedipus Cycle: An English Version*, trans. by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald (NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1977), p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> From a PBS broadcast on Oppenheimer's life, on the explosion of the bomb: "Recalling the scene, Oppenheimer said: "A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. There floated through my mind a line from the "Bhagavad-Gita" in which Krishna is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty: "I am become death: the destroyer of worlds."" Quoted on <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peopleevents/pandeAMEX65.html>

<sup>10</sup> In *Personal Knowledge* (University of Chicago Press, 1958), Polanyi gives a subtle and telling analysis of Marxism's combination of moral passion with 'scientific objectivity,' but it is only this combination which concerns him (pp. 227-235). The problem of knowledge itself as a possible source of a certain kind of tragedy, or corruption, is not seen. I have a clear memory of Bill Poteat, in a seminar on Polanyi, describing Polanyi's lack of a sense of the tragic. Poteat saw this as an element of Enlightenment optimism in Polanyi, due to his thoroughly scientific training.

<sup>11</sup> A Catholic theologian, John Haught, also writes: "Rational arguments diminish the mystery of God, seeking to bring it under the control of the limited human mind." *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> See Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), and J. A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, p. 324.

<sup>14</sup> Critics of revealed or innate morality – I'm thinking here of sociobiologists, for example – would reply that our "sense of outrage at things not the way they are supposed to be" (151) is simply the result of our having been raised to think in terms of right and wrong. Cultural anthropologists – Jared Diamond, for example – might also point to the fact that his New Guinean field work subjects do not feel **moral** outrage at the things we do. Thus the attempt to prove God on the basis of a moral sense runs into the same problems that traditional arguments for the existence of God do: the arguments are constructed in a system of rationality which will not allow admittance to the very features that Meek wants to emphasize (embodiment, relationality, unspecifiability, etc.). See, for example, David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).