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This edited volume contains selected papers from a symposium held at McGill University in Montreal in November 2009 to honor and assess the legacy of the Canadian Islamicist, scholar of comparative religion, and liberal Protestant theologian, Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916–2000). Smith arguably was ahead of his time when, in his groundbreaking book *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1962), he called for the term religion to be dropped due to its association with reified systems of thought known as the world religions, and replaced by the more experiential term, faith. The contributors to this book take up from differing perspectives Smith’s call to re-evaluate the objectification of faith as it has been developed according to the world religions paradigm. Of the fourteen contributors to the book, seven can be classified as theologians: two currently hold posts in theology (Amir Hussain and K. R. Sundararajan), four are distinguished scholars from Harvard Divinity School (John B. Carman, Harvey Cox, William A. Graham, and Donald K. Swearer), and one is Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Divinity in Trinity College, Toronto (Peter Slater). The other seven contributors more generally fall within the approach to the study of religion most associated with the comparative study of religion, or what otherwise might be called the science of religion (Purushottama Bilimoria, Thomas B. Coburn, Diana Eck, John Stratton Hawley, Jonathan R. Herman, Sheila McDonough, and Robert A. Segal). Both the editors, the late Ellen Bradshaw Aitken and Arvind Sharma, are from McGill University, where Wilfred Cantwell Smith began teaching (after earning his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1948), and where he founded McGill’s Institute of Islamic Studies. Aitken was trained in folklore and mythology and taught early Christian history, whereas Sharma currently holds the post of Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill in the Faculty of Religious Studies.

Among the contributors to this book an inevitable unease can be found between those who represent theological disciplines, or are at least highly sympathetic to theology, and those who can be classified as scholars in comparative religion. The tension between theology and the science of religion found in this volume reflects Cantwell Smith’s own awareness of the potential conflict between theological and empirical approaches. Smith’s emphasis on the human and experiential element within studies of religion became fully explicit in one of his later publications, *Towards a World Theology* (1981), in which he clarified and expanded his earlier contention that personal faith constitutes the locus of religion. He claimed that faith cannot be studied in itself.
Rather, the expressions of faith in the form of typological categories, such as myth and ritual, and their historical developments in specific traditions, properly constitute the objective content of scholarly studies. Descriptions and classifications, however, are limited. They only provide insight into the structure of religion without revealing its essence. By acknowledging that religion at its core centers on personal faith, the student of religion learns to adopt an empathetic attitude that is necessary for any genuine understanding of the meaning of religion to be achieved, that is, from the “inside” by reflecting the believers’ own perspectives. Smith's emphasis on personal faith produces a tension between theological and empirical methods that is evident in many of the chapters in this book, and is never far from the surface in others, even if it is not an issue addressed by each contributor directly.

A clear example of this tension is found in the contrasting positions developed by Jonathan R. Herman of Georgia State University (not a theologian but one who is highly sympathetic to theology) and Robert Segal of the University of Aberdeen. Herman points to the central issue relevant to the relationship between theology and religious studies: “whether religious studies is primarily a humanistic or social scientific enterprise, one that requires (in the former case) self-consciously cultivated intuition and aesthetic imagination or (in the latter) quantifiable data and falsifiable hypotheses” (p. 118). Or to put it more bluntly, he asks, “Are theologians equal partners in the academic inquiry, or are they participants in an entirely separate discourse” (p. 118)? He calls those who reject theology as a legitimate method in the study of religion “gadflies,” who reduce theology by making it part of the subject matter of religious studies, alongside rituals, myths, symbols, and other classifications of religious phenomena (p. 118). Herman exemplifies the two fundamentally opposed scholarly approaches reflected in theology and religious studies by drawing attention to the contrasting stated aims of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR). The AAR, Herman notes, “welcomes all disciplined reflection on religion — both from within and outside of communities of belief and practice,” whereas NAASR restricts its remit to “the historical, comparative, structural, theoretical and cognitive approaches to the study of religion” (p. 118).

Herman draws attention to the practical differences between these two approaches by arguing that the AAR position encourages “religiously engaged scholarship,” while the NAASR approach discourages or even rejects scholarly involvement in public discourse in its rigid commitment to academic “neutrality” (p. 118). What follows in Herman's chapter is an intriguing and insightful application to contemporary events of a lecture Smith delivered in 1963 at Yale Divinity School in which he asked, “Is the Qur'an the Word of God?” In the