

Hearing the two words “science” and “religion” might bring to mind a set of apparent opposites: observation and revelation, rationality and emotion, Galileo and the Church, John Scopes and Christian Fundamentalists. For many, science and religion have represented mutually exclusive realms of knowledge, equally dismissive of one another’s claims. That “religion” and “science” have come to mean what we now understand them to mean only in the last few centuries demonstrates how they have each been shaped by a relatively recent history. Central to that history has been the experience of European empires that laid the foundations of our globalizing world today. British India served not only as one critically important cornerstone of empire but also as a central arena for the mutual development of science and religion as we now understand them. In contrast with their popular image as foes, Protestant Christianity and empirical science intimately shaped one another in imperial India while refashioning Western views of Hindus and Muslims.