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Heathen Books and Christian Tracts.

The word *Bible* means "a book;" and *Scripture* is "a writing." When we say *Holy Bible*, we mean "holy book;" and by the *Holy Scriptures* we intend the "holy writings." Now, it need scarcely be asked why the Bible is called *holy*; for we know it has been given to us by the holy God, that it was written under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and is designed to make men holy.

Many of the heathen have books which they call *sacred*, or religious; but they cannot be said to be "holy." We shall soon see how different they are from the word of God.

In the East Indies, the Hindoos have their sacred writings, which they call *Vedas*, or the "four books." They are written in Sanscrit, which is a *dead* language; that is, a language not now spoken by the people. This is as though our Bible were only printed in Latin. How few would then be able to read it! It would be no Bible to the thousands of little children who live

in our land; and how many poor and aged people would be deprived of the chief comfort they have in the world! But, then, the heathen priests do not wish the people to read their sacred books; they say, these writings are only for the priests; and if any of the poorer classes dare to read them, or even *listen* to them when read, they are threatened with eternal death. How unlike is this conduct to the direction given by our Saviour, "Search the Scriptures," John v. 39; and to this text, "the poor have the gospel preached to them!" Matt. xi. 5.

Next to the *Vedas*, are the *Sub-vedas*, or "inferior writings." The poor may hear these read; but, then, what good can they get from them? There is not a single word to teach men about God, and their duty to him.— They profess to treat of war and music; and give many absurd accounts of the sun and moon, and the other heavenly bodies, but these are not the books which a sinner needs, to show him how to find pardon, peace, and eternal life.

Besides these, the Hindoos have other books, called *Shasters*, or "comments." The priests say, that these writings once filled a million of volumes, though only a few have been preserved to the present day. It would have been better for the people if they had been all lost; for those that remain are full of the most unholy stories and songs, and encourage wicked men in their sins. They contain prayers for thieves and housebreakers, that the gods may grant them great success, and give them plenty of plunder! They teach the worship of *Kalee*, the "god-