In this chapter several important concepts and related literatures and theoretical informations have been formulated for the support of the study.

**The Holy Bible**

The Bible is the greatest love story ever written. It speaks of the unbelievable love of God for humankind, His enduring unconditional love for every human being. The Bible shows us a God, who creates us out of love for us, who calls us, invites each human being to a life of friendship, intimacy and union with Him. It is the written record of God revealing Himself to us and revealing to us our own humble beginning and the glorious destiny waiting for us. It shows us our human dignity and our human weakness in answering God’s loving invitation and God’s untiring helps to us to reach our glorious destiny.

It contains two parts: the first part is the Promise God made. A descendent of the woman would crush the head of the Serpent – the Satan. The second part is its fulfilment by the loving God.

In order to fulfil this promise, God called Abraham to make of him the beginning of His special people; God called Moses:

- to set free His people from Egypt,
- to make with him a covenant,
- to make him a law, for their lifestyle,
- to give His people a land of their own.
God chose David, to begin a line of Kings who would rule His people as His representatives until the coming of the King, who will defeat the power of Satan.

God sent prophets, to keep alive in the minds of His people the Promise and the hope of its fulfilment.

This is the first part of the Bible – The Preparation.

The second part of the Bible is the Fulfilment of the Promise in Christ, the Son of God.

Content of the Bible

The word Bible comes from the Greek word ‘ta biblia’ meaning books. The Bible is not a single book, but a library of 73 books. They are of different kinds, written / composed by several persons, at different times and in different places, under different circumstances. The composers were not scientists or historians. They did not want to convey us scientific information or explanation of events. Without exception they were all firm believers in God; they wanted to give us their experience of God. So, the Bible must be read and heard with a believing mind and heart. It has meaning only for the believer. Hence it is called Holy Bible or Sacred Scripture.

The Bible has two parts. The first consists of 46 Books preserved by ancient Hebrew people. It is called Old Testament.
Testament means Agreement or Covenant. They deal about the History of the Hebrews: God choosing them as His own people out of love,\(^1\) and delivering them from slavery in Egypt, under the leadership of Moses and taking them to Canaan, the promised land – they called this saving event Exodus. Of these, 39 books were written in Hebrew in Palestine; 7 others were written in Greek in Alexandria, an Egyptian city. Orthodox Jews met in the city of Jamnia in the year A.D. 79 and decided to accept only the 39 books originally written in Hebrew as Holy. The Protestants follow the Jews in considering only these 39 books as Sacred.

The Bible contains several types of literature: they are mainly divided into three kinds:

1) Historical books
2) Teaching (wisdom) books and
3) Prophetical books.

The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament. God renewed and perfected the covenant He made with Moses, in His Son Jesus Christ. There are 27 Books in the New Testament. All Catholics hold all these 27 as Sacred Books. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament is divided into three main parts:

1) **Historical**: 4 Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles
2) **Teaching books**: 13 Letters written by Saint Paul, 2 by Peter, 3 by John and 3 by others.

\(^1\) Dt. 7: 8.
3) **Prophetic**: Revelation of St. John.

Thus, the Bible contains 73 books.

The Bible as we have now, passed through 3 stages of formation: the first stage is the actual occurrence of events like Exodus. Secondly, these events were narrated and passed on orally from one generation to another. Thirdly, these oral traditions were collected and committed to writing at a later date. The formation of the Bible took several centuries to be completed. Perhaps from 1300 B.C. (Moses) to A.D. 100, when St. John wrote the Book of Revelation, the last Book of the Bible.

We do not have original copies as written by writers or composers, we have only handmade copies made from the original, which were circulated among the believers; and used in worship; still they enjoy the same value as the original and revered as Sacred. They were written on flattened papyrus reed, which were stitched into separate sheets and rolled up on cylinders.

The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek in Alexandria in the third century B.C. According to a legend, 72 experts worked independently and produced identical translations; so it is called the Septuagint (70 in Greek as a round number). St. Jerome translated the Bible into Popular Latin in the 4th century A.D., it is called the Vulgate (popular). King James version is a famous English translation done by Protestants. The
revised standard version is used by both Catholics and Protestants. The Bible has been translated into almost every known language.

   The whole Bible rests on three pillars:
1) The call of Abraham, who is called the Father of those who believe.²
2) The saving event of Exodus, under the leadership of Moses.³
3) The fulfilment of all God’s promises in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the New Covenant.

   The Bible is fully meaningful only to those who believe in God. It is the prized possession of the Church. Others can read it as any other book; but for the children of the Church, it is the story of God’s love for all people. Therefore one should have an attitude of faith to read, to listen and to understand it.

**Agriculture**

   According to the Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 1 (A-C) page 95.1,

   Agriculture is the cultivation of soil for food products or any other useful or valuable growth of the field in garden; also by extension, it includes any industry practised by a cultivation of the soil in connection

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² Rom. 4: 11.
³ Ex. 12: 42.
with such cultivation, as fruit raising, animal husbandry, dairying and gardening.

**Domesticated animal**

It is related to family affairs or household. The animals were reared at home. Food, clothing and shelter have been to a great extent, the results of the tilling of the soil and related activities such as the rearing of domesticated animals.\(^4\)

**Pastoral activities**

It is associated with shepherds of flocks and herds.\(^5\)

**Animal husbandry**

It is associated with the animal farming which is very useful for the cultivation of the soil.\(^6\)

**Garden of Eden**

Man’s enjoyment of the Garden is a gift from God. Man’s happiness is consequent upon his remaining subject to God. In this concept lies the whole meaning of the Garden.\(^7\)

**The Record of Agricultural Pursuits**

Agriculture was the chief occupation of the inhabitants of Palestine. The cities were throughout their history simply the

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\(^4\) Gen. 37: 12-14; 26: 12.

\(^5\) Psalm. 23 ch., Matt. 18: 12.

\(^6\) Lk 15: 29; Prov. 27: 27.

\(^7\) Gen. 2: 15; The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Vol.1, p.12.
walled residences of farmers. Biblically the record of agricultural pursuits is nothing but the agricultural products that began with the mandate given in the Garden of Eden 'to till it and keep it'.

The immediate post–Edenic situation featured both the agricultural and pastoral way of life as represented by Cain and Abel respectively. Secularly this period is best represented by the beginning of farming in the lower Jordan Valley around Jericho in the mid 8th millennium B.C. in a culture closely resembling that of major Mesopotamian centres. Food, clothing and shelter have been to a great extent, the results of the tilling of the soil and related activities such as raising of domesticated animals. Hence the words,

In toil you shall eat of it (i.e., the ground) all the days of your life... In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

have had real meaning for the people who had lived in this land through the centuries. It refers to hard work and labour and because of the hard work and labour, people lived long through the centuries.

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8 Gen. 2: 1.
10 Gen. 3: 17, 19.
**Food products in the Bible**

The food products that were used in Israel in biblical times were many more. They are such as mineral food, vegetable food, and animal food.

**Mineral food:** There are two kinds of food. The first, namely water, was obtained from rivers, lakes, springs, wells and cisterns. The second was produced from the Mediterranean but especially from the Dead Sea. The book of Joshua mentions the 'city of salt'\(^{11}\) which is possibly to be identified with Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found.

**Vegetable food:** It is more probable that mankind from the beginning made use of both animal and vegetable food. The dominion given to humans over animals\(^{12}\) included the eating of them; prehistoric findings point out to primitive man as an omnivore. It is only after settling down as agriculturists that humans became chiefly eaters of vegetable food. The most important grains of the Bible were wheat and barley. Other grains were millet and spelt.\(^{13}\) Vegetables of different kinds are mentioned in the Bible but much more often in post-biblical Jewish literature. Vegetables in general (cereals included) are mentioned in the Book

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\(^{11}\) Joshua 15: 62
\(^{12}\) Gen. 1: 26.
\(^{13}\) Ezk. 4: 9.
of Daniel.\textsuperscript{14} Lentils, white and red, 'the red' (brown) thought to be the best variety, were considered very tasty and nutritious.

In the desert the Israelites longed for cucumber, melons, leeks, onions and garlic of Egypt.\textsuperscript{15} Cucumbers, leeks and onions could be eaten raw with bread but they could also be cooked. The 'bitter herbs' of the Passover ritual\textsuperscript{16} were probably wild lettuce or wild endive. A 'dinner of herbs' was considered a poor dish.\textsuperscript{17} The book of genesis\textsuperscript{18} considers grains and fruits proper human food and assigns 'every green plant' to the animals.

**Animal food:** Like most Semitic nations, the Hebrews passed through a nomadic stage during which animal food (meat and milk products) was the mainstay of their diet. Even the patriarchs, from Abraham, were nomads but transhumants or 'seminomads', i.e. though they had their flocks and often went away in search of good pasture,\textsuperscript{19} they also sowed and reaped their own grains.\textsuperscript{20} A mixed diet therefore was the rule with them. Abraham offered both animal and vegetable foods to his guests.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{14} Dnl 1: 12; Isa. 61: 11
\textsuperscript{15} Num. 11: 5.
\textsuperscript{16} Ex. 12: 8, Num. 9: 11.
\textsuperscript{17} Prov. 15: 17.
\textsuperscript{18} Gen. 1: 29.
\textsuperscript{19} Gen. 37: 12-14.
\textsuperscript{20} Gen. 26: 12.
\textsuperscript{21} Gen. 18: 6-8.
Among the animals, sheep and goats were reared in large numbers. As a meat, the goat was less appreciated than the sheep. Goat’s flesh, mostly of the kids, was the cheapest form of meat. Among the animals, sheep and goats were reared in large numbers. As a meat, the goat was less appreciated than the sheep. Goat’s flesh, mostly of the kids, was the cheapest form of meat.\(^{22}\) Most of the Israelites’ milk came from goats.\(^{23}\) Milk was consumed both fresh and after it had soured.

The sheep of Palestine were mainly of the fat-tailed species. In honour of a guest or at a festive occasion lambs were slaughtered.\(^{24}\) Less is said about the slaughtering of adult sheep. Calves supplied a highly appreciated meat the ‘fatted calf’ of Lukan gospel.\(^{25}\)

### Production techniques

The techniques which the inhabitants of Palestine used were plows, sickles, threshing instruments, winnowing instruments, sieves, seeders and storage.\(^{26}\)

### Agricultural products

The people of Palestine have been mainly agriculturists. The three crops which dominated the agricultural life of the country were vine, olive tree and grain. These three products appear in the

\(^{22}\) Lk 15: 29.

\(^{23}\) Prov. 27: 27.

\(^{24}\) 2 S. 12: 14

\(^{25}\) Lk 15: 23.

\(^{26}\) 1 King 19: 19; Isa. 28: 24-25; Hos. 10: 11.
passages attesting both to their importance and to their widespread cultivation.\textsuperscript{27}

**Flocks and Herds**

Flocks and herds were considered to be the necessary part of the Israelites' wealth. They were their valued possessions and often they lived with them and led them in search of pasturage.\textsuperscript{28}

**Agricultural laws**

Laws related to landed property and cultivated land, including all laws concerning the preservation of soil, regulation of irrigation, and protection of rights concerning landed property. The agrarian laws in the Old Testament form a very important part of Biblical institution. In the earliest laws of the Old Testament, punishments were prescribed for damage done to cultivated land. Exodus considers examples of damage to a field or vineyard, with the penalty in each case being full restitution.\textsuperscript{29}

**Exchange system**

Trade and communication: The movement and exchange of goods and services that make up commerce are shown in the Bible. This part will first treat the biblical occurrence of the two terms and then summarize some major features of trade and transportation in

\textsuperscript{27} Gen: 27: 28; Deu. 7: 13; 2 King 18: 32; Neh. 5: 11; Hos. 2: 8; Joel 1: 10; Haggi 1: 11.

\textsuperscript{28} Psalm 23; Matt. 18: 12.S

\textsuperscript{29} Exo. 22: 57.
the biblical world. Successful trade brought wealth.\textsuperscript{30} It was normal to invest resources.\textsuperscript{31}

**Distribution system**

The early Church in the New Testament times was a witnessing community. It was a sharing community. “And all who believed were together and had all things in common and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had needed.”\textsuperscript{32}

**Spiritual food**

The Israelite diet was determined by the availability of foodstuffs. The most important vegetables were beans and lentils. Fruits included olives, grapes, figs, dates, pomegranates and sycamore figs. Food was regarded as the gift of God.\textsuperscript{33} Food as the essence of physical sustenance is depicted as of lesser importance than spiritual food.\textsuperscript{34}

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\textsuperscript{30} Ezek. 28: 5.  
\textsuperscript{31} Lk 19: 13.  
\textsuperscript{32} Acts 2: 40-45.  
\textsuperscript{33} Deut. 8: 8-10.  
\textsuperscript{34} Deut. 8: 3; Matt. 4:4; Par Lk 4: 4; Jn 6: 33-35, 48-58.
RELATED LITERATURES

1. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
   (Vol.1, pp 56-60)

   This literature reveals the art of arable farming, including the tools and methods and the difficulties which the farmer faced. Agriculture is intimately related to: i) the religion, and ii) the literature of the Bible.

i) Agriculture and the Religion of the Bible

   So much a part of life were the agricultural pursuits that it seemed as though God had established them from the beginning as the superior way of life. The land was the gift of Yahweh and was under his care. It was thought by some, not only that the farmer learned the techniques of good husbandry from God, but also that Yahweh and only Yahweh had it in his power to order the natural forces in such a way as to assure the maximum results from man's labours. On the other hand, references to what dire calamities may and do befall the man or nation who sins permeate the prophetic utterances. Much of the Torah stems from and is directly related to the agricultural life.

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35 Gen. 3-4, especially 3: 23.
36 Deut. 11: 12.
37 Isa. 28: 26.
38 Isa. 5: 8-10; Amos. 4: 1-8; Hag. 1: 4-11.
The three major festivals which according to the Deuteronomist, the Israelite was required to observe in Jerusalem were strictly agricultural in nature. They were connected with the products of the earth. These in turn were the gifts of Yahweh, and therefore due reverence must be paid to him. Aside from the origin of these laws, they marked the beginning of the grain harvest, the end of that harvest, and the final ingathering of all the fruits of the year’s labours. The Sabbath may also have had agricultural origins, as suggested by its appearance in the old ritual Decalogue.\(^{39}\)

Of the thirty-five sections of the Deuteromic code, eight deal in whole or in part with matters pertaining to the agricultural life of the people.\(^{40}\) A tithe of the seed must be given. The first-born of the flock must be given to the Lord. Landmarks might not be moved – this law appears earlier in the original form of the anathemas.\(^{41}\)

Grain could not be sown in a vineyard, nor was one permitted to plow with an ox and an ass together.\(^{42}\) It was permissible to eat of a man’s grapes or grain on his property, but one was not permitted to take any with him.\(^{43}\) These few illustrations and there are many more suffice to show that the legislation of ancient Israel


\(^{41}\) Deut. 27: 17.

\(^{42}\) Deut. 22: 9-10.

\(^{43}\) Deut. 23: 24-25.
was intended to regulate many aspects of the life of the people as it related to agricultural pursuits. Since all these laws were at one time or another viewed as emanating from Yahweh, it becomes clear that this facet of life, like many others, had a strong religious tone.

ii) Agricultural and the literature of the Bible

Figures of speech reflecting the agricultural life may be found throughout the Bible. The glorious future of a restored Israel is expressed in agricultural terminology. Vineyards and gardens will be replanted and will flourish.\(^44\) So great was the joy of a good harvest that this became the mode of expressing any great joy, and contrarily any deep sorrow was like the sorrow brought on by a poor crop.\(^45\) Likewise the poets and sages found the common agricultural vocabulary pregnant with meaning and used it when they wanted to express themselves with great force.\(^46\) Especially do the words of Jesus reflect meaning which agricultural figures could convey to the man in Palestine, the parable of the sower,\(^47\) the parable of the labourers in the vineyard,\(^48\) “From the fig tree learn its lesson, as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its

\(^{44}\) Amos 9: 14; Zech 8: 12.

\(^{45}\) Isa. 16: 10.

\(^{46}\) Prov. 10: 5; 26; 21: 30-34; Job 5: 26; 24: 2, 6; 10-11, 18-19, 24; Pss. 65: 9-13, 80: 8-13; 128.

\(^{47}\) Mk 4: 1-20.

\(^{48}\) Matt. 20: 1-16.
leaves, you know that summer is near”;\textsuperscript{49} “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit.”\textsuperscript{50} The seed, the vine, the tree, the fruit – all these were useful metaphors when a writer or speaker wished to express the truth about God and his ways with man.

2. **The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible**  
(Supplementary Volume, pp 11-13)

This literature reveals the various stages of agriculture that existed in the ancient period.

3. **The Anchor Bible Dictionary**  
(Vol.1, pp 95-98)

This Anchor Bible Dictionary brings out the background to the agriculture, conditions of agriculture, agricultural products, vegetables, fruit trees, fieldwork and influence on culture.

4. **Harper’s Bible Dictionary**  
(pp 303-304)

This literature reveals the whole process of cultivating land and raising crops, from soil preparation to storage and transport of crops to the market. Archaeologists have discovered that farming was practised in Palestine for almost ten thousand years. If one includes the breeding of livestock, it is clear that agriculture has

\textsuperscript{49} Matt. 24: 32.  
\textsuperscript{50} Lk 6: 43-44.
always been the basis of Palestine’s economy. No human activity is as prevalent as farming in the Bible.

The most important crops were wheat, grapes, and olives (Ps 104: 15, Joel 2: 19); other crops included barley, flax, lentils, chick-peas, cucumbers, onions, melons, dates, figs, and spices. A wide range of crops and trading and pastoral activities enabled farmers to provide for their families.

Farmers were occupied throughout the year with animal husbandry, and heavy field work never ended. Land was marked off with boundary stones (Prov. 22: 28); ground was cleared of rocks and thorns (Isa. 5: 2); fields, vineyards, and orchards were hedged and walled (Isa. 5: 5; cf. Mark 12: 1); and hillsides were terraced. Most farming activities, however, were dependent on the seasons.

The Bible demonstrates that almost every aspect of agricultural work assumed a figurative meaning in the minds of ancient speakers and writers (e.g. Isa 21: 10; Amos 9: 13; Mic. 4: 12-13; Matt. 9: 37-38; 13: 3-32; Luke 9: 62; 1 Cor. 9: 9-11; Gal. 6: 7; Rev. 14: 14-20).

5. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
   (Vol.2, pp 327-331)

This literature reveals the foodstuffs used in Israel in biblical times, specifically those kinds of food that were explicitly mentioned in the Bible, though it may be assumed confidently that there were many more. The foodstuffs used in Israel were mineral
food, vegetable food, animal food, food preparations, by food regulation, and food supply.

6. **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**  
(Vol.1, pp 71-75)

This literature reveals that the agricultural laws related to landed property and cultivated land, and included all laws concerning the preservation of soil, regulation of irrigation and protection of rights concerning landed property. The only laws in the Old Testament that can be assigned to this class are those relating to the fallow in the Sabbath Year and the Jubilee and certain laws of negligence.

The agrarian laws in the Old Testament are a very important. In spite of the opinion that those instructions and the agrarian laws are of a late date, their antiquity must be held. They are linked in biblical sources to the oldest parts of legal jurisprudence.

7. **The Book on ‘Earliest Christianity’ by Martin Hengel**  
(pp 156-182)

This book throws light on the distribution system of early Christianity. The Church in the New Testament times was a witnessing community. It was a sharing community and all who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to those in need. Also it deals with the concept of Jesus’ Free Attitude to Property and the ‘Love Communism’ of the Primitive Community.
8. **Harper’s Bible Dictionary on ‘Trade and Transportation’**  
(pp 1086-1091)

This literature throws light on some major features of trade in the biblical world. Trade and communication is the movement and exchange of goods and services that make up commerce. The term ‘trade’ is based upon one’s occupation in general. It contributes to pursuit of prosperity and remedy for desperate prisoners. To secure progress, travellers and travel have played a vital role in transforming a major link in communication. It is likely that transportation and trade was analysed as a human achievement. In this process people probably moved to follow food supplies as hunters and gather them before they began the trade.

The waterway served both for moving people and goods and made water available for agricultural development. The Romans were supreme in sea power by developed human powered rovers. Thus the sea connections brought expensive spices, precious stones, metals etc. in the golden period. Also it throws light on land transport, foot travel, marketing, records, and means of exchange.

9. **New Catholic Encyclopedia**  
(Vol.1, pp 214-220)

This literature throws light on agricultural economics and brings out the idea of the development of agriculture, such as prehistoric agriculture, slavery and serfdom, monastic contributions, depopulation and recovery, influence of early
America, the 19th century technology, the 19th century socioeconomic changes, government and agriculture in the 20th century, and science and agriculture in the 20th century.

    (pp 239-245)

11. Archaeology and the Bible by George A. Barton
    (pp 148-153)
    The concept of Roads and Agriculture is brought out very well in this book.

12. Archaeology and the Bible
    (p 154)
    The concept of the Agricultural Calendar is brought out very well in this book.

The Agricultural Calendar

In the Books of the Old Testament it appears that at Gezer they had a series of names for the months based on agricultural year. In the stratum which contained remnants from the time of the Hebrew monarchy, 1000-550 B.C. an inscription was found which, though the end was broken away, contained the following names for the months:
1. Month of ingathering. Exodus 23: 16; 34: 22
2. Month of sowing
3. Month of the late sowing
4. Month of the flax-harvest
5. Month of the barley-harvest. Ruth 2: 23; 2 Sam 21: 9
6. Month of the harvest of all
7. Month of pruning (vines)
8. Month of summer fruits (figs).

This calendar beginning in October still confirms to the agricultural pursuits of the year. It also gives us archaeological evidence of the culture of flax by the ancient Israelites.51

**Views of the Pope John XXIII**

The movement of workers from farm to industry was recognized by Pope John XXIII as a necessary consequence of economic development. When discussing the problems of agriculture *In Mater et Magistra* (1961), he observed that “as economic life progresses and expands, the percentage of rural dwellers diminishes, while the great number of industrial and service workers increases” (124). Because of his appreciation of the values associated with rural living, the Pope expressed regret over this uprooting of rural populations and suggested programmes and

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51 Josh. 2: 6; Prov. 31: 13; Hosea 2: 5, 9.
policies that will make rural living more attractive as well as economically possible.

Pope John recognised also the role of food and agriculture in economic progress; in his encyclicals ‘Mater et Magistra (1961) and Pacem in Terris’ (1963), he commends people of developed countries for giving concrete witness to the fact of human solidarity through programmes of foreign aid, including in particular donations of farm products. He urges that such programmes be expanded and accompanied by technical assistance.

It is hoped that in the future the richer countries will make greater and greater efforts to provide developing countries with aid designed to promote science, technology and economic life (Mater et Magistra 165).

In one of the few encyclicals to deal at length with modern agriculture, Pope John XXIII welcomed governmental involvement in agrarian life. Indeed, in his Mater et Magistra of 1961, Pope John urged governments to assist farmers more directly and more often, and he encouraged farmers to get help in reducing the harshness of the free market.

**Views of Pope Leo XIII**

Human exploitation, long opposed by the Church, became neither necessary nor useful. The final Catholic statement came with Pope Leo XIII’s Rerum novarum in 1898, which proclaimed principles of justice for the new technical era and pointedly
reasserted the right of farmers to own their own land. Ideas about human dignity changed in many parts of the world, and in Christendom, at least, slavery ended.