Suffering and Sanctification: A Study of Biblical Parallelism in Select Novels of Graham Greene.

Thesis Submitted to the University of Calicut
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the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in English

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"Suffering and Sanctification: A Study of Biblical Parallelism in Select Novels of Graham Greene"** submitted by **Sr.C.I.Lizy** to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English** is a bona fide record of the research carried out by her under my supervision. No part of this thesis has been submitted before for the award of any degree or diploma or any other similar title.

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28-08-2008

Declaration

I, Sr. C. I. Lizy**,** hereby declare that this thesis entitled **"Suffering and Sanctification: A Study of Biblical Parallelism in Select Novels of Graham Greene"** submitted by me to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English** is a bona fide record of the research carried out by me and that no part of it has previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, or any other similar title of any University.

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Abbreviations

BC	Graham Greene: *A Burnt-Out Case*.
BR	Graham Greene: *Brighton Rock*.
CCE	*Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays.*
CE	Graham Greene: *Collected Essays*.
CW	The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross.
DN	St. John of the Cross: *The Dark Night of the Soul*.
EA	Graham Greene: *The End of the Affair*.
HM	Graham Greene: *The Heart of the Matter*.
JWM	Graham Greene: *Journey Without Maps*.
LCOE	Graham Greene: *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays*.
Life	Norman Sherry: *The Life of Graham Greene*.
OM	Marie-Francoise: *The Other Man: Conversations with Greene*.
Oth.	Shakespeare: *Othello*.
PG	Graham Greene: *The Power and the Glory*.
PL	Milton: Paradise Lost.
QA	Graham Greene: *The Quiet American.*
WE	Graham Greene: *Ways of Escape*.

Bible

I Pet.	1Peter.
2 Sam.	The book of 2 *Samuel*
Deut.	The book of *Deuteronomy*.
Exod.	The book of *Exodus*.
Gen.	The book of *Genesis*.
Isa.	The book of *Isaiah*.
Job	The book of *Job*.
Judg.	The book of *Judges*.
Matt.	*The Gospel according to St. Matthew*.
N. T.	*New Testament*.
Num.	The book of *Numbers*.
O. T.	*Old Testament.*
Phil.	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians.
Ps.	The book of *Psalms*.
Rom.	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans.

Preface

Graham Greene, one of the most prolific and talented writers of modern times, is recognized as an eminent Catholic novelist. The universal appeal of Greene to readers of varied interests is the ample proof that he is primarily an artist. Critical estimations of Graham Greene centre on the obsessions attached to Catholicism, the theme of betrayal, lost innocence and corrupt human nature. Greene exemplifies the spiritual struggle of the modern man and hence his relevance as a novelist exceeds beyond the particular form of his novels and they transcend all the barriers of theological frontiers. Greene's fictional characters hover between the damnation and salvation, an ambivalent idea which embraces his whole life. Analyzing his major Catholic novels – *The Heart of the Matter*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair* – in particular, the proposed study tries to explore the themes of suffering and sanctification as exposed in the novels by making a Biblical parallelism.

Much has been written about Greene's relationship to his Catholic faith and its privileged place within his fictional works, especially in his Catholic novels. The present study explores the Biblical parallelism in the select novels of Graham Greene on the realm of spiritual conflict, where the very nature of suffering which leads the human soul through the path of progress to God. Chapter one charts Greene's life and works in the light of the conflict between good and evil and serves the introduction to the study. Chapter Two examines Greene's view of the mental agony suffered by

Scobie, the protagonist of *The Heart of the Matter*, before committing suicide and compares with the inner struggle of Samson, the last Judge of Israel, the Biblical model selected for the study. It is an analysis of the conflict of the individual against the Orthodox religious conception. This parallel study helps the reader to realize the willingness of the characters to die for others, accepting some sort of martyrdom in their life situations. Chapter Three discusses the spiritual conflict of the whisky priest during the time of religious persecution in comparison to the Biblical model, King David. Chapter Four assesses Greene's real sense of sinner-saint paradox, in his novel, *The End of the Affair* which leads the readers into the heights of sublime level and of the celestial bliss. The theme of suffering and sanctification has been analyzed in the study. Chapter Five considers the present study and evaluates the observations done earlier. Summing up, the last chapter tries to establish that Greene, though apparently expressed his disbelief, was a staunch Catholic to the last. He led a Catholic life and surrendered himself to the infinite mercy of God. Greene was not confined by the official teachings of the Catholic Church as he had his own views on man, sin, grace, freedom, redemption, damnation, suffering and salvation. Greene may very well have the same opinion of Thomas Merton that: "It is only the infinite mercy and love of God that has prevented us from tearing ourselves to pieces and destroying His entire creation long ago." The creative achievements of Greene as a Catholic writer may be reflected through the challenging task of plumbing the depths of evil in a fallen world and exploring sin to enhance the possibilities of salvation or seeing through the "appalling strangeness" of God's mercy.

It is God who comes in search of man, while man attempts to hide himself

behind creatures from the divine pursuit. Greene's preoccupation with the Biblical themes, where his perplexed mind meets new life, is revealed through the characters of Henry Scobie, the whisky priest and Sarah Miles. In connection with the spiritual struggle of man, and faith in the religion, Greene says, "It is a mystery which can't be destroyed . . . even by the Church . . . a certain mystery". This mysterious way of God is reflected in Greene characters in an explicable manner by the author. This very fact which is applicable to the present world, attracted my attention and inspired me to land upon the title: "Suffering and Sanctification: A Study of Biblical Parallelism in Select Novels of Graham Greene".

First and foremost, I thank God Almighty, who showered His abundant graces upon me, and strengthened me to cross each step successfully.

I express my sincere gratitude to all those who have helped me under God's providence, to make this humble contribution, however inadequate, to Graham Greene studies. I am grateful to Dr. C. P. Jose, Chiramel, Retd. Professor of the Research Centre and Department of English, St. Thomas College, Thrissur, for having kindly consented to supervise my thesis. His profound, unassuming scholarship and warmth of humanity have been an unfailing source of inspiration. I remember how he has been of immense help to me at every step of my work and I thank him for his precious time and uncomplaining forbearance without which this thesis would not have been possible.

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Unlike Milton, who was anxious to explain the ways of God to man, Greene is eager to demonstrate that the ways of God must remain inexplicable.

- Frederic R Karl, *A Reader's Guide* .

Chapter I

Introduction

> Pain is a part of joy . . . That is why I tell you that heaven is here: this is a part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure. He said, 'Pray that you will suffer more and more and more. Never get tired of suffering.'
>
> - Greene, *The Power and the Glory*, 69

Modern literature is a curious blend of tradition and experiment. The modern era is characterized by intellectual revolution. Internationalism and science have influenced all the branches of literature and thus the modern age has become an age of interrogation and questioning of prose and reason. The age is essentially the age of novel, for novel is made an immensely popular form of literature today more than it was ever before. Though the novel made phenomenal progress during the Victorian age, it could not achieve that greatness and glory which it has attained in the hands of the modern novelists. The modern English novel is remarkable for its large variety and complexity. Most of the novelists of the modern age have tried to portray the contemporary life realistically. The rapid growth of science contributed something to the feelings of pessimism and despair in the modern novel. The modern novel presents the doubts, conflicts and the frustrations of the modern world realistically, which appear to be a constant experimenter. It is predominantly psychological, reflecting man's loneliness and the forces working in his mind. The twentieth century has also been an age of great spiritual stress and strain.

Novelists like Henry James, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and

Dorothy Richardson have made the English Novel psychological in nature. The English novel between the two World Wars was enriched by D. H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, J. B. Priestly, Somerset Maugham etc. and the novelists of the Stream of Conscious School such as James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. Walter Scott, the father of the historical novel, has presented the past history of France, England and Scotland in a life-like and realistic manner. Twentieth Century novels were written practically on all possible themes and subjects which appeal to modern readers. In modern novel, all the facets of contemporary life, pleasant and unpleasant, beautiful and ugly, have been realistically presented with detailed accuracy. There is a remarkable humanitarian spirit in modern literature. T.S. Eliot regards man as ‘hollow’ and this world of ours as the ‘waste land’. According to W. B. Yeats, human sorrow becomes an essential obsession, deeply eternal and burning like a flame. Some modern writers are skeptical about God and some others are spiritual or mystical.

With the 1930’s, there began a new generation of novelists having religious sense, with Graham Greene at the centre. The new novel is remarkable for the novelty of themes such as man’s relation to himself and to God, chaos and disintegration, loneliness and frustration of the modern man and his society. In his essay on Francois Mauriac, Greene’s words are noticeable: “With the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act” (LCOE. 76). Graham Greene is one of the most outstanding novelists after the Second World War. He is mainly concerned with evil and its endless conflict with morality. In many of his literary essays and interviews of

the

1930s, 40s and 50s, Greene expressed his grief over the loss of the religious sense in the English novel.

A brief introduction to Greene's life and works, a description of a few of the critical works to identify the obsessions of Greene and the purpose of the present study constitute the scope of this introductory chapter. With the novels of Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene, the Catholic genre found a popular voice in England in the 1930s and 40s. Waugh's conversion was anchored in his belief that the essential truths of Catholicism had been degenerated by an English society freed from its Catholic birthright. Greene also a convert, shares with Waugh much of the same Catholic concerns and issues in his writing, but in many ways, Greene comes closer than Waugh to dramatizing the themes of the Catholic Novel. Being a Catholic convert, Greene has been obsessed with the problem of good and evil and his books are a curious blend of theology and bare modern realism. Greene has brought back to the English novel this religious sense, and dealt with spiritual problems as faith, salvation, and damnation in his novels. Among the finest criticisms of Greene, George Woodcock states: "Theologically Greene may recognize original sin, but in his writings, the evil in man is always less than evil without arising from the collective activities of society. His observation of humanity, forces him into a revolutionary attitude" (199). He portrays evil in all its dimensions and indirectly, through his literary works, wants his readers to fight against evil.

Graham Greene, the English novelist, playwright, poet, critic, essayist, story writer, and editor was born on 2 October, 1904. He received his early education at

Berkhamsted school, where his father was Headmaster, and later went to Balliol College, Oxford. The memories of his unhappy childhood and school life, exercised a great influence on his imagination. His childhood was divided between the hatred of school and the boredom of holidays. This boredom seemed to him the only alternative to the black and grey evil of human nature. After leaving Oxford in 1925, Greene worked as a journalist, sub-editor of *The Times* and became an independent writer. He has been a widely acclaimed and popular author throughout the most part of his long career. His prominence derives mainly from his novels, most of which pursue his obsession with the darker side of human nature. His fictional work represents one of the genuine voices of the age, proclaiming its disgust and despair, its guilt and struggle to find faith.

Graham Greene was converted to Catholicism in 1926 mostly to please his future wife, but quickly began to absorb Catholic Doctrines. However, his wife Vivien had a strong influence on his religious inclination. As *The New Dictionary of Theology* describes, the term ‘Catholicism’ has a universal sense and a wide-ranging meaning in itself. Historically it has the meaning of the traditions, beliefs, way of life, institutional obligation, and the worship and moral standards of Christians, which uphold full institutional bond with the Church of Rome. The Church is called ‘Catholic’ because it has a widespread faith and tradition in all parts of the world and teaches all doctrines that the Catholic communities have to know for their salvation (167-168). Greene started employing the Catholic ideas and Catholic visions such as the sinner at the heart of Christianity and God as the Hound of Heaven in many of his most celebrated works called “Catholic novels” such as, *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The*

Power and the Glory (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), and *The End of the Affair* (1951). Greene's 67 years of writing included over 25 novels, two collections of short stories, two travel books, seven plays, two biographies, two autobiographies, some film scripts and film criticism, and countless literary and journalistic essays. This brief history of British fiction and the social and the religious background of Graham Greene's life, works and influences will throw light on the select novels of the present study.

An in depth study of Greene's works makes us aware that he has been obsessed with the problem of good and evil. There is a theological dimension in his works, and this is certainly a significant contribution of Graham Greene to English fiction. In novel after novel, he points out the meaninglessness, the seediness, and the vulgarity of a society living without a sense of God. Percy Wilson observes in *Modern Novelists*, "the theme of Greene's novels is the conflict between good and evil in men's minds and the setting is always contemporary. He is obsessed by what seems to him the meaninglessness of the lives of men who have no faith" (110). As a Catholic, he sees his characters, even the characters in his less serious novels, known as 'entertainments', always under the segment of eternity. His novels deal with events and characters taken from real life. He emphasizes the experience of suffering in Christian life as a sign of God's love. The conflict between good and evil is reflected in the depiction of his characters, such as Pinkie and Rose's Catholic world of good and evil versus Ida's world of right and wrong in *Brighton Rock*, the whisky priest versus the lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory*, Major Scobie's tortured conscience

in conflict with his own sense of responsibility and pity in *The Heart of the Matter* and the believing Sarah versus the unbelieving Bendrix in *The End of the Affair*.

Among the critical assessments on Greene's works, certain authors play a very remarkable role in making his theme of Catholicism known to the world. John Atkins, Francis Mauriac, De Vitis, Roger Sharrock, Maria Couto, Henry Donaghy, Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, David Pryce-Jones, Francis Wyndham, Cedric Watts, Evelyn Waugh etc. are noteworthy. All these reputed international authors and critics of Graham Greene, evaluate and express their critical views on the obsessional themes and the spirit of Catholicism of Greene. John Atkins emphasizes Greene's treatment of Catholicism. His personal style of criticism is informal and he deserves credit for focusing attention on the Catholic dilemma in Greene: "*The Heart of the Matter*, *The End of the Affair* and later *The Living Room* were not the work of a man who was completely satisfied in his faith" (207). Greene is influenced by Catholicism and John Atkins expresses his opinion regarding this, "I know nothing of the spiritual conflict that caused Graham to turn to the Catholic Church, and he has told me in a letter that he wouldn't discuss it anyhow. . . and the Catholic faith offered him anchorage" (14).Marie-Beatrice Mesnet asserts Greene's preoccupation with the spiritual intensity in his novels. De Vitis is interested in explaining religious subject matter and religious belief seen in the works of Greene. David Pryce-Jones pays attention to the social relevance of Greene's fictional works. Roger Sharrock, in *Saints, Sinners and Comedians*, asserts that, "the novelist of spiritual dryness and despair has never been a novelist of the absurd" (25). He tries to enlighten Greene's treatment of Catholic themes of fallen humanity and the mysterious working of God's grace.

This thesis proposes to explore the novels of Graham Greene and subject them to a parallel study with certain selected Biblical episodes and characters, comparing their inner struggles and spiritual conflicts. The study focuses on the parallel study of the theme of spiritual conflicts in the life of the protagonists, namely, Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*, and Sarah Miles in *The End of the Affair* with regard to their respective Biblical personae, Samson, King David and 'the sinful woman'. These sinner-characters of Greene are selected for analysis because they appear to be more daring and heroic than all the other Catholic protagonists of Greene, to renounce their sinful ways forever in order to respond to the call of divine grace. The life of Scobie, whisky priest and Sarah Miles are obvious models for those who retain their freedom of choice to fight against evil, till the end of their lives. It is proved from their life that one has to undergo some painful experience or inner struggle to renounce the worldly pleasures. It is a fact that one cannot achieve eternal peace and joy without renouncing one's temporary pleasures. As pain leads to gain through the redeeming aspect of grace, suffering becomes meaningful in this world, where evil reigns. Thus, one may find this study an attempt of exploring man's capacity to endure pain in order to achieve greater gain in the selected novels of Greene. This may help the readers to understand Greene's characters in a better way, and to realize various mental and spiritual struggles and conflicts confronted by them. It is deemed that this study would help the readers to comprehend how these characters continue their journey with hope and peace. This is an analytical study of

sin and suffering and the mysterious nature of salvation to mankind. Thus, it is a comparison of Greene's protagonists with the Biblical models, on the realm of suffering and sanctification.

As far as Greene-study is concerned, many scholars have already worked out several Catholic topics and angles. The present study is also quite relevant, in the sense that it may lead the readers to a spiritual and theological understanding of Graham Greene's Catholic novels. In the words of Francis Wyndham, "Fear, pity, violence, pursuit and the endless restless quality of man's search for salvation and of God's love for man, are the recurring themes of Graham Greene's novels" (25). According to Maria Couto, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* explicitly deal with the themes and structures of religious belief. "Anguish about sin and damnation is replaced by deep faith as expressed in action which is sometimes political struggle" (84).

The purpose of this parallel study mainly focuses on the exploration of similarities and dissimilarities on the subject of spiritual conflict in the fictional characters of Graham Greene and the Biblical personae selected for the present research work. Since certain reliable similarities were observed in these characters, the researcher is convinced of the scope and variety of such a work, and so this topic is selected for the study. The mental agony of Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* is compared with the inner conflicts of Samson, the last Judge in the Old Testament. The spiritual conflicts of the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* are compared with that of a Biblical model, King David; and the Celestial Bliss experienced by Sarah Miles, the heroine of *The End of the Affair* is compared with the anonymous 'sinful

woman' in the Gospel according to St. Luke in the New Testament. The sinful woman experiences inner peace and joy, at the feet of Jesus. (Luke. 7.36-50)

Since it is a study of parallelism, a brief introduction is required for the same but a detailed explanation regarding the origin and the types of parallelism is not proposed to be included in the study. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* defines the term, 'parallelism' as, "The repetition of identical or similar syntactic patterns in adjacent phrases, clauses, or sentences . . . The core of parallelism is syntactic; when syntactic frames are set in equivalence by parallelism, the elements filling those frames are brought into alignment as well especially on the lexical level" (877).

'Character-parallelism' is applied in the present study exploring the spiritual conflicts experienced by both the fictional characters and the Biblical models. The organization of character-parallelism is a very familiar element in Shakespearian drama. An excellent effect is obtained when the central idea of one part of the action reappears in another part, each supporting and strengthening the other. Parallelism is a dramatic device frequently used by playwrights in the organization of a plot. It is also well represented in the traditional poetry, as stated in the above-cited Encyclopedia (878). It is now generally approved that parallelism is a fundamental law, not only of the poetical, but even of the symbolic and therefore of higher style in general in the Old Testament. The importance of parallelism as an aid in determining text-critical and explanations and thus affording the key to the correct interpretation of many passages in the Bible, is evident. The two largest categories of Biblical literature are

prose and poetry. Prose is often used when telling stories about people and historical events, and it usually includes dialogue. Most of the Bible is written in prose, with such features as plot, character, and timing. Poetry is also used throughout the Bible, and certain books are written completely in poetic form. Parallelism is not an exclusive peculiarity of Hebrew. Much of the poetry in the Old Testament can be described as ancient Hebrew poetry, which is marked by a literary feature called parallelism. This feature is the repetition or reinforcement of a single idea which is used in successive lines of poetry, in order to communicate its message.

Greene has been a prolific writer and it was at the end of his Oxford career in 1925 that he published a collection of poems entitled *Babbling April*. Greene's first novel, *The Man Within* (1929) explores the theme of man's double nature. The issues of the divided mind, sin, and repentance are very explicitly presented through the protagonist, Andrews. It is about a betrayal, and it is set against the background of skeptical romance. Andrews is a typical Greene hero, who is an isolated character and finds himself lonely. The lonely man has to live with the angry man inside: "he is made up of two persons, the sentimental, bullying, desiring child and another more stern critic" (MW. 24). Inner conflict is of course one of the major issues in drama and fiction and especially since Freud there have been several important explorations of the ambivalent or multiple personality before Greene's works. In Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Conrad's *The Secret Sharer*, the theme of inner conflict has prime importance. The conflict between good and evil is the dominant theme in the novels of Graham Greene.

Brighton Rock (1938) marks the climax of Greene's obsession with evil. It

deals with the question of sin, betrayal, damnation and salvation. The central figure of the story is Pinkie Brown, who at the age of seventeen, by force of brains and character, establishes himself as the leader of a race-course gang after the death of Kite who was slashed to death at a railway station by a rival gang. Pinkie's first task is to arrange the murder of Fred Hale who had given Kite away. Knowing that a witness is his only means of safety, Hale tries to find someone to stay with him and succeeds in picking up Ida Arnold, a friendly woman, who is not the one to let a man down. But in the few minutes while she is away Fred is killed. His death is officially pronounced as 'natural' but Ida Arnold thinks otherwise. She has her suspicions and is determined to track down the murderers of her boy-friend. Pinkie, a cold-blooded killer, finds himself obliged to marry, in spite of his feeling of aversion, a pathetic sixteen year-old waitress named Rose, who, like him, is a slum-born Roman Catholic and might have given evidence against him. Made desperate by Ida's pursuit, Pinkie leads Rose pitilessly on to a false suicide pact in order to shut her mouth forever. The novel concludes with Rose carrying the child of the dead killer. Thus, it is a tale of crime and violence centered on betrayal or the fear of betrayal: Hale is murdered for betraying Kite's gang; Pinkie betrays Spicer and marries Rose out of the fear of betrayal; Cubit betrays Pinkie in a scene reminiscent of Judas betraying Christ; Pinkie dies denouncing Dallow, his most faithful follower; and Rose, of course is betrayed by Pinkie throughout their relationship. A sign of moral degeneration of the modern world seems to pervade the novel. Thus, Pinkie is apparently the most powerful

embodiment of evil in Greene's novels.

Greene's best known work, *The Power and the Glory* (1940), is representative of his treatment of character and theme. Here, as in all of his fiction, thematic concerns are worked out more through characterization than through plot. The protagonists of Greene are typically unfortunate or fallen characters, whose moral failings reflect a broad range of corruption and suffering. Greene's four major 'Catholic novels'-*The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair, and Brighton Rock* offer insight into the theological concepts of mortal sin and atonement, drawing attention to the paradoxical virtues of vice itself. Almost all the novels of Greene show his preoccupation with the theme of evil in this world and the victory of good over evil. For instance, the theme of *The Power and the Glory*, is the conflict between the Church and the State and the victory of the Church over the State. There is a certain element of evil or sinfulness in the nature of the priest in the novel.

In order to define Graham Greene's literary position as Catholic writer, in relation to the traditional and contemporary writers of fiction, the thesis undertakes a parallel study of the inner conflicts of Greene characters, with their corresponding Biblical characters. The study explores the spiritual conflicts of the three protagonists of Greene's major Catholic novels – *The Heart of the Matter*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair* – making a parallel study with three Biblical personae. The three Biblical models selected for the analysis are, Samson and David in the Old Testament and 'the sinful woman' in the Gospel according to St. Luke in the New Testament. The purpose is to focus on the Catholic view of suffering, where the characters undergo purgatory, here on earth itself, in order to achieve grace and

salvation. Greene presents the spiritual struggle of man against a background of 'seedy' town life or in the Mexican jungle or in wartime West Africa. In *The End of the Affair*, Greene exposes the paradox of a sinner-saint. The sinners outnumber the virtuous in Greene's work, however, and even those characters, sometimes perceived to be saints, such as the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*, the policeman Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, Sarah in *The End of the Affair*, are in reality very fallible creatures. His characters live out their 'purgatory' in their lifetime in places like West Africa, Indo-China or Central America. Characters become involved with the dirt and sweat of existence and in doing so they find that it can be made holy. The awareness of evil experienced by Greene in his childhood has prompted him to incorporate it into his novels. Thus one may be convinced that the novels of Graham Greene primarily deal with Catholic concerns.

Most critics have adopted Greene's division of his works into 'entertainments' and 'novels'. Some critics have further subdivided Greene's novels into 'Catholic novels', which focus on the characters' religious concerns, and 'political novels', which explore the consequences of their characters' aloofness. Catholic novels show their protagonists' struggles and failures to live up to the religious belief that they are unable to deny and the tragic consequences these characters face for striving unsatisfactorily toward their moral ideals. The political novels also portray characters, which are to some extent, both corrupt and idealistic. Both the Catholic and political novels depict shabby surroundings and detectives, murderers and adulterers as main characters. The people in Greene's novels are continually on the run, from their

crimes and their consciences. Despite critical controversies, Greene is remembered not only as the author who redefined the modern thriller to examine the place of religion and morality in the twentieth-century society, but also as a novelist who probed the possibilities for grace and redemption in the area between good and evil. Greene's three novels selected for the present study are known as his major Catholic novels. In Keshava Prasad's observation in *Graham Greene: The Novelist*, "In the post-war period, particularly after the publication of Graham Greene's three major novels of the middle period, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair*, which could all of them be read as written under the influence of the Catholic Church" (2).

As Anthony Burgess remarks in *The Novel Now*: "Graham Greene is much more interested in the actual doctrines of the Church, particularly the fundamental doctrine that states that good and evil are not mere relative terms like right and wrong, but unchanging absolutes" (61). T. S. Eliot in his essay, "Baudelaire" explains it more clearly: "In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with original sin" (SE. 378). Greene had set the real struggle of the mixed human heart against the conventional world. John Burgess Wilson remarks in his study on English Literature:

> Greene sees the spiritual struggle of man against a background of 'seedy' town life (*Brighton Rock)* or in the Mexican jungle (The *Power and the Glory)* or in wartime West Africa (*The Heart of the Matter)*. In this last work, and also in the moving *The End of the Affair*, Greene shows a concern with the paradox of the man or woman who, technically a sinner, is

really a saint. (288)

Greene believes that man is not only predestined to sin but also capable of salvation. In the words of P.S. Sundaram, "all the time Greene is obsessed with God" (*Indian Express*, April 13, 1991). Marie-Beatrice Mesnet emphasizes the divine process of salvation, saying, "It was for this world that Christ had died" (75).

Greene is described by the critics as a Catholic writer: the human struggle between faith and doubt, despair and alienation, good and evil, salvation and damnation and the suffering and sanctification of modern humanity, are the constant themes in his works. Walter Allen in his article on Greene in *Scrutiny* speaks of the various aspects of arts, thus: ". . . of these the first and most important is Greene's deep-rooted and profound awareness of evil" (31). As a convert to Catholicism, Greene took his religion seriously. Greene is primarily concerned with the theme of evil and the salvation of a Catholic. S. Krishnan remarks in his observation of Greene's concerns and asserts thus: "Greene's works deal with sin, the dark places of the mind, and the evil aspects of human nature, failure and moral problems" (*The Hindu*, April 14, 1991). Krishnan also suggests that these subjects influenced him all through his life from his unhappy childhood. Henry Donaghy comments on Greene that "the sense of evil, then, came to Greene in his early reading long before any religious experience could explain it" (17). Greene's novels primarily deal with fallen men. According to A. A. De Vitis' observation in *Graham Greene*, "Greene chooses to deal with the seedy, the unlikable, and the unhappy, those in whom he feels the strange power of God" (16). Marie - Beatrice Mesnet argues that Greene has strong

faith in the divine mercy: “The greater the failure of man, the greater the mercy of God. Greene himself has said that his purpose, . . . in choosing the weakest, the most abandoned human beings as material for his creative imagination, was to throw a brighter light on God’s infinite mercy and on his power to turn even evil . . . into good” (78). Greene believes that God’s grace works in mysterious ways and proceeds to explain the evil and suffering around us in theological terms.

Mesnet, in her observation of Greene’s novels, *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, and *The Heart of the Matter*, remarks: “With Rose we meet for the first time the theme of the supreme sacrifice, offered to God for the love and salvation of men, which in the other novels will take the extreme form of the whisky-priest’s martyrdom and Scobie’s oblation” (99). J. P. Kulshrestha, in *Graham Greene: The Novelist*, depicts Greene’s obsession with evil, revealing the evil deeds through his characters: “His deeply personal vision is of a gloomy, squalid world, dominated by pain and ugliness, violence and treachery, inhabited by isolated, hunted and guilt-ridden men and women who are driven to crime or sin, and eventually to despair and death, achieving . . . the mercy of God, the regeneration of the spirit or salvation” (17). He also observes that, “Greene’s preoccupation with the ultimate destiny of a sinner, creates the sinner-saint paradox” (87). There is a mixture of Christian faith, psychology, and literature in the character depiction of Greene’s novels. There is a theological dimension in Greene’s works and this is certainly a significant contribution of Greene to English fiction. By incorporating the contradictory concepts of the Catholic faith, like the conflict between good and evil, salvation and damnation, Greene has expanded the boundaries of the English novel. The present study is an

exploration of the inner conflicts of Greene's characters in the light of Theological and Biblical perspectives. According to the Holy Bible, God is the creator. God is good and whatever he created is good:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon . . . And God said, let there be light; and there was light . . . And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; . . . and God saw that it *was* good . . . let the earth bring forth the living creature . . . God created man in his *own* image . . . it *was* very good. (Gen. 1.1-31)

God created everything except evil. Evil is assumed to have been the first attempt of man's own creation. Evil creates conflict within the good, for it is in disharmony with God and man. Thus, for a Christian, the problem of evil has become an unsolved riddle. Sin becomes the fundamental mystery of man's existence. The mysterious nature of sin and salvation of man is to be understood from the teachings of the Catholic Doctrine. According to Catholic Theology, God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In every human mind, there is an evil will that contradicts the good will. The evil will of man denies the good and destroys the good will. It also creates disunity in the human will. It is a fact that evil exists in the world. In the *Holy Bible*, the opening chapters of the *Book of Genesis* describe the first human pair, Adam and Eve, and the origin of evil by their disobedience. In the words of Thomas Merton, "Life and death are at war within us. As soon as we are born, we begin at the same time to live and

die. Even though we may not be even slightly aware of it, this battle of life and death goes on in us inexorably and without mercy" (*The New Man*, 9).

The first man could enjoy the happiness of heavenly paradise only for a short period. Though he was one with God in obedience, and determined to remain so, the influence of evil through the woman tempted him to the sin of disobedience. The result of their sin is their separation from God, and consequent exile from Eden. Then the Lord God said: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3.22). From the implicit assumption of God's goodness, one can find the presence of evil in the world itself as it is the outcome of sin, and the abuse of free will by the rational beings. A B Sharpe in his book, *Evil: Its Nature and Cause*, comments: "The bearing of the problem on religion . . . presents itself in the shape of the question, 'How can such a God be supposed to endure the existence of what is absolutely contrary to His own nature?'" (11). It is true that evil exists in the world, but it can be overcome, for God is with man and his spiritual power is supreme. Peter Milward, in his *Christian Themes in English Literature* states: "Man must have been created by God in a state of happiness as symbolized by the Garden of Eden; for God is good and delights in the goodness of all he has made" (118). God, who is good, is capable of converting evil into good. Milton's *Paradise Lost* here supports this view defining the justifications of the ways of God:

> O goodness infinite, goodness immense! That all this good of evil shall produce, And evil turn to good; more wonderful. Then that which by creation first brought forth light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand whether I should repent me now of sin . . . to God more glory, more good

> will to men. From God and over wrath grace shall abound. (Book XII. 466 - 478)

Milton here suggests that God allowed Adam to commit sin, but God intended this sin to lead to the process of salvation. It is noteworthy here to add Milton's observation, which Peter Milward quotes in his *Christian Themes in English Literature*: ". . . the Church's liturgy for Holy Saturday goes even further with the famous exclamation - '*O Felix Culpa*!' O Happy fault of Adam, which merited to have such a Redeemer!" (45).

T. S. Eliot, in his essay, "Baudelaire", defines the concept of good and evil thus; "so far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human" (SE. 377). *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* by James Hastings defines the concept of good and evil: "Good is 'what ought to be', evil is 'what ought not to be'. . . 'What ought to be' seems to apply better as a description of what is right . . . The good in all its senses is the desirable, and the evil is the undesirable . . . These two are inter-related in a variety of ways. In a way, evil is logically necessary for the attainment of certain good" (318). One may find a similar idea in the book of Revelation: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3.15-16). T. S. Eliot, in his essay '*Baudelaire'* says, "it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least we exist" (SE. 377). Good is that which comes to us and that which starts from

us. And there are mainly two types of evil. There is evil, which man suffers and endures and secondly there is evil which man does. Evil means the contradiction of the good and also can be the deliberate denial of the good. James Hastings defines good as: “the plentitude which comprises and transcends all beings, the one source which confers everything, fulfils everything, and so is in harmony with itself” (319).

There is a power in the universe which is working against the programme of the good. Evil is something to be fought and overcome by human will with the divine power. As St. Paul emphasizes: “Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12.21). Eerdmans in his *Bible Dictionary* says: “The Scriptures confess that the Lord created mankind with the possibility of doing evil and that he supports the faithful in their deepest hour of trials and temptations” (360). Thus, God the creator envisages for them the failure or success of human beings to live the life. Sin, in its basic sense, is always ultimately against God himself, rather than against mankind or any human person. The Book of *Genesis* illustrates this: “And unto Adam He said, ‘because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life” (Gen. 3.17).

The fatal act of disobedience is committed, the free and happy relationship between man and God is broken, and thus the curse falls. All the good and useful activities are darkened and turned to evil. The serpent becomes the age long enemy of God and man. In a way, evil contributes to the total salvation of mankind by the mercy of God. For a Christian, it is a reality at the very heart of his faith, represented in the sign of the cross. For, St. Paul says: “For the preaching of the cross is to them that

perish

foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1Cor. 1.18). It is by the suffering and death, Christ has conquered the power of sin and death. Jesus is the only Saviour incarnated to save the world with His own Body and Blood. Thus teaches the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering servant . . . . At his baptism 'the heavens were opened' - the heavens that Adam's sin had closed - and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation" (106). There is no other name given among men by which we must be saved other than the name of Jesus. In *The Acts of the Apostles*, it is written: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (The Acts. 4.12).

The history of Israel very often describes a picture of a merciful and forgiving God. In the Old Testament, God is also pictured as cruel and vengeful, only to bring back Israel from their infidelity to the steadfast love of Yahweh, their only God. The Holy Bible is a single book which is divided into The Old Testament and The New Testament in order to bring out the real picture of God, who has been a father, mother, teacher, brother, friend and the Savior to Israel in their entire history. In the history of Israel, God plays different roles in order to grow them in real faith; He loves them as His beloved children and punishes them when they disobey His commandments and go astray from real faith. As a teacher, He guides them, giving instructions to grow in His infinite wisdom and knowledge. In the New Testament, one may find God incarnated as man in Jesus, to save the world with His own Body and Blood. Jesus, as

a brother, instructs us how to love God and to love and consider one another as brothers and sisters. According to the Catholic belief, God even plays the role of a Savior, sacrificing His own Body and Blood for the salvation of the entire world: “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole” (The Acts. 4.10).

In spite of this Catholic belief, in the Old Testament one may find a God, who is jealous, cruel, vengeful and punishing. But immediately after Israel’s sin, when they worshipped the golden calf, God hears Moses’ prayer of intercession and agrees to walk in the midst of an unfaithful people, showing His love. Then the Lord passes before Moses and proclaims; “The Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Exod. 34.6). Moses then proclaims that the Lord is a forgiving God.

In the *New Testament*, one finds Jesus inviting sinners to the table of the kingdom of God: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark. 2.17b). According to the Catholic Church, He invites them to that conversion, without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed, His Father’s boundless mercy for them and the immense “joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke. 15.7). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives prime importance to the Sacramental rites: “By Baptism, all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins . . . In those who have been reborn, nothing remains that would impede their entry into the kingdom of God, neither Adam’s sin, nor personal sin, nor

the

consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God" (247). Those who approach the Sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy and are reconciled with the Church. The Church calls it the Sacrament of Forgiveness, because "by the priest's Sacramental absolution, God grants the penitent 'pardon' and 'peace' " (*Catechism*, 274).

God created man in his own image, and likeness, and nothing can ever blur completely the image of God in man. It is like a birthmark that cannot be rubbed out. Man is deeply rooted in God, for it is only in God that he can find his real existence and perfect his self. Man is split between supernatural forces while the great conflict between God and Satan rages in the world as well as in his own heart. This conflict is seen in the *Book of Job*, where a conversation begins between God and Satan:

> And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said; Doth Job hear God for nought? . . . thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power. (Job. 1.8-12)

In the life of Job, one finds the terrible fight between good and evil and the ultimate victory of good over evil is proved strong. Almost all the novels of Greene show his preoccupation with the theme of conflict between good and evil in this world and the victory of good over evil. Greene portrays his characters and their predicaments as so

very human and so completely believable. The central characters in Greene's novels are Catholics and they are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others. Greene portrays the mental agony and the sense of guilt of these characters in the light of the Catholic doctrines and the concepts of modern psychology. These characters are aware of and concerned with the risk of self-sacrifice.

Greene has accepted the Christian doctrine of sin and salvation. He tries to explain in his novels, the human predicament and human response in terms of Christian philosophy. Greene assumes that the problem of evil and suffering is one of the profound mysteries which man faces in this present world. He believes that the fall of Adam and Eve was a catastrophe and man suffers permanently as a result. "Since death is the effect of sin . . . it is by dying . . . with Christ that we are liberated from it," says Mc Brien in his book, *Catholicism* (163). St. Paul is of the same view: ". . . for the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6.23). Greene believes that, in spite of human weaknesses, man can achieve the final victory through Christ and the Spirit, as St. Paul writes: ". . . and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8.17).

This dissertation endeavors to deal with the concepts of sin and death, salvation and damnation and analyze the theme of suffering in Greene's Catholic novels. His most recent novels such as, *The End of the Affair* (1951), *The Quiet American* (1955), *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961), and *The Comedians* (1966) also probe into the problems of good and evil and the wretchedness of the human condition. For instance, Thomas Fowler, the hero of *The Quiet America*, is full of self-pity, and haunted by a sense of

guilt.

Greene is deeply obsessed with the theme of sin and it can be seen in his depiction of Pinkie and Rose. He has tried to explain the evil and sin around us in this world from the point of view of Christianity. Greene suggests that, within the limits imposed on Pinkie's life, he could not but choose evil. His evil amounts to eternal pain. The religious theme of *Brighton Rock* comes to the fore in the confessional scene after Pinkie's death. It clarifies Greene's ideas of sin and redemption through the dialogue between Rose and the anonymous priest. Rose is convinced that Pinkie is damned and so she too wants to be damned. She declares: "I want to be like him - damned" (BR. 248). She is ready to sacrifice everything, including her own salvation for his sake. But the priest tells her about the strangeness of the mercy of God. Greene adds a Theological perspective to his presentation of evil: *Brighton Rock* deals with the question of sin, damnation, and salvation. In this novel, the boy Pinkie is depicted as the most powerful embodiment of evil. Pinkie may be regarded as the one who has been predisposed to evil.

Greene has great faith in God's grace and points out in his Catholic novels that even the smallest act of faith or love is infinitely precious to God and will work for the salvation of the humanity. Greene insists on the infinite mercy of God and tries to win our sympathy even for the immoral youth, Pinkie. Subramaniam writes about Greene's belief in grace and salvation: "Pinkie, the whisky-priest and Scobie are openly concerned with the issue of salvation and damnation" (30). At the end of the novel, the readers may find Rose as the instrument of Pinkie's salvation.

Greene believes that with suffering man becomes part of the Christian myth. A

leper colony in Central Africa is the setting for Greene's *A Burnt-out Case* (1961). This novel is set in Belgian Congo. The central character Querry is a famous Catholic architect. He takes flight from his old life and stops only when he can go no farther, having reached the heart of darkness, a leproserie in the Congo. There are then dialogues between Querry and Dr. Colin which reveal that Querry's spiritual state is like that of a leper in whom the disease, treated too late, has run its course; though technically cured he is mutilated, a burnt-out case. Querry arrives at the leproserie in a state of indifference and abandonment, a man bereft of any association or emotion. Querry is portrayed as a hermit of the Congo.

In the novel, *A Burnt-out Case*, Greene describes the loveless relationship between the Christian couple, Rycker and Marie, with great irony. With deep disgust, Marie escapes from home, and takes shelter in the leproserie. But, Querry spends the night telling the story of his own life in the form of a parable. Hating her husband, Marrie announces that Querry is the father of the child she is carrying, and the consequence of this affair is that Rycher shoots his rival. Querry dies for the mistaken assumptions and stupidities of others. Like other Greene characters, Querry, the tragic hero also suffers and dies for the sake of others. Like Scobie, in *The Heart of the Matter*, his pity for others is the cause of his destruction. Greene ends the novel, *A Burnt-out Case*, with the question whether Querry had found salvation for all his sins.

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or *The Bomb Party*, (1980) is the latest of Greene's novels and here again the theme is the meaning and implications of evil. It is a profound study on greed. It focuses on Dr. Fischer, a rich businessman, who wants to conduct an experiment on human life and to see the limit to human greed. He gives

parties and expensive gifts to the rich people and subjects them to all possible insults and humiliations. These parties give him pleasure and amusement. In the last party - the bomb party - the gifts are cheques of two million francs each, concealed inside Christmas crackers and thus his guests are torn between greed and fear of death and debase themselves completely. Consequently Dr. Fischer is left alone with the last laugh. There are Christian allusions in the novel and the doctor is often compared to God and sometimes to a soul eternally damned. Greene shows that evil is rooted in man himself and poses a constant temptation to his worst inclinations. He tries to reconcile the problems of sin, suffering, and the pain and misery of man with the love of God. He approaches the problem of evil from the point of view of Christian theology and stresses the fact that suffering, evil and even sin work together towards good.

Greene, in his works, deals with the themes of good and evil, and of immortality and God. He pictures the profound problems of human life and points out the growing feeling of mental anguish experienced in modern times, due to the decay of religious faith. According to him, the most important thing in life is man's relationship to God. Faith to him is a leap into the dark to which men are driven by awe and anxiety. His novels and heroes are deeply rooted in the conflict and reconciliation between confusion and conviction, sin and salvation, evil and good. Greene is deeply disturbed by evil in the world, and it is clear from the novel, *The Heart of the Matter,* where he challenges to show a happy man without selfishness and evil. Greene's preoccupation with evil is apparent to a greater or lesser degree in

all his novels, but it is perhaps most evident in *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. It is easy to observe this in his Catholic novels called 'trilogy', since in each of them the protagonist dies, and in each we are bound to ask whether he goes to hell or not. Readers may assume that the destination of the first protagonist is to hell, the second to heaven and the third is uncertain for, he commits the unpardonable sin of despair by suicide. Greene has often emphasized the struggle between salvation and damnation in the depiction of his novels.

A reading of Graham Greene's novels convinces the reader that the problems of evil are part of some profound mysteries which man is quite ignorant of, and which he tries to reconcile with the love and mercy of God. He believes that the fall of Adam and Eve was a great tragedy and as a result, man suffers for ever on earth. Greene raises in his works, the problems of sin and suffering of man, in order to explain the inevitability of suffering and evil in this world from the point of view of Christian faith. He points out the purgative value of suffering in order to achieve salvation. The Catholic novels of Greene describe the sufferings of mental anguish and spiritual conflict as basic means to sanctification. Wilhelm Hortmann in his article, "Graham Greene: The Burnt-Out Catholic", expresses the 'spiritual tension' within the author: "Over the period of ten years, from *Brighton Rock* in 1938 to *The Heart of the Matter* in 1948, the attempt to humanize one of the central doctrines of the Church . . . must have built up a spiritual tension in the author which he could not endure forever" (69).

Many of Greene's heroes like Pinkie, Rose, Scobie, the whisky priest, Sarah Miles, etc., are Catholics. But they are irresistibly attracted by the power of evil. What distinguishes these Catholic characters from the others is their strong consciousness of

sin. But, Ida Arnold in *Brighton Rock* and Helen Rolt in *The Heart of the Matter* are free from the awareness of sin, as they are not Catholics. Greene's characters may be sinners, but they are full of human kindness and pity. His characters, though completely crumbled by sin, seem to be closer to spiritual reality than the pious people. Because of their willingness to sacrifice their lives and even suffer eternal damnation for the sake of those whom they love, Greene credits Rose, the whisky priest, Scobie and Sarah, for all their sinfulness, with spiritual experiences comparable with those of saints. Their spiritual conflicts can be compared to the sufferings of certain Biblical characters. Like some of the characters in the Holy Bible, Greene's Catholic characters also seek salvation with sincere repentance through their sacrifice, suffering, and even martyrdom.

Those famous sinner-characters of Greene always retain their freedom to renounce their sinful ways, and to respond to the call of divine grace. The life of Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*, and Sarah in *The End of the Affair* are powerful examples for this. In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the prototype of the Christian quest is the quest of the good man for virtue, for the Heavenly City of God; but in Greene's works, the sinner who stumbles along the way to Heaven undertakes the quest for virtue. In their attempt to transcend themselves through the knowledge of both God and the devil, they try to regain some sense of balance in a corrupted universe. They seek God in a devil-controlled universe and become the heroes. But, they are fully aware of the weakness of their selves, and

the wickedness of their desires in contrast with the transcendence of their hopes. Greene believes that in order to leap from pride to humility they must suffer the pains of conscience; and in their suffering, they come to terms with their individual salvation.

The thesis is a parallel study of Greene's fictional characters with the Biblical episodes and models, comparing their background, special divine call, life situations, weakness and offense, and their inner conflicts and suffering to reach sanctification. Three Biblical characters are selected as the models for analysis. The following chapters will give a detailed account of those fictional and Biblical characters including their divine call, weaknesses, sufferings and conflicts. The characters here - Greene's as well as the Biblical - undergo and experience three stages of struggles such as mental, spiritual, and sublime, before reaching the heavenly bliss. The Bible characters selected as the models for analysis are Samson, the last judge of Israel and King David in the Old Testament and 'the sinful woman' of the Gospel according to Luke, in the New Testament.

The present study covers five chapters that comprise the Introduction and the Conclusion. All the three main chapters provide an analysis of the fictional characters and the respective parallel figures from the Bible. Three Biblical *Personae* or models are selected for the comparative study and their call and response, offenses and transgressions, repentance and sanctification and God's mysterious intervention in their lives are depicted in the analysis.

The second chapter gives a detailed analysis of the real conflict between good and evil in a secular character, Scobie in the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*. The

mental agony of the protagonist is the focus of the novel and the conflict between the individual against the Orthodox religious concept has been featured and analyzed along with the parallel study of the Biblical model, Samson. Both the internal and the external conflicts within the characters and their willingness to die for others, their suffering and martyrdom are discussed in the chapter. *The Heart of the Matter* is the story of a secular character, named Scobie, who has been depicted as a sympathetic character in his relationship with his wife Louise, with his mistress Helen, and in his relationship with God. Greene portrays Scoby's metal agony in his Catholic point of view. Samson is the last Judge in Israel. God delivered Israel, the chosen people of Yahweh, from the hands of Philistines. Samson has been used as the divine instrument for the purpose. While fulfilling the great task given by God, Samson had to suffer severe mental and physical pain and struggle. This chapter is a parallel study on the theme of the inner conflict of Major Scobie, the protagonist with the inner struggle of Samson, the Biblical model selected for the analysis. The critical assessment of the Greene protagonist, Major Scobie of *The Heart of the Matter*, and the Biblical model, Samson is done in the chapter with their background, their profession and the divine call. Their mental agony will be discussed in the second chapter.

Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory* possesses the idea of spiritual transformation of a sinner into martyrdom and thereby sainthood. In the novel, there is a conflict between the Church and the State, which developed the conflict between the whisky-priest and the lieutenant. The third chapter throws light on the situations, where the protagonist, whisky priest is subjected to temptation and the way he endures

physical, mental and spiritual pain to attain unearthly power and glory at the end. Greene presents the whiskey priest, as a drunken sinner who has broken his vows by fathering a child. He struggles with his moral conscience - feels himself unworthy of God's grace - considers himself as useless to his parishioners. But Greene depicted the priest as the best, who sacrifices his own life in order to administer God's work to his people. During the religious persecution, the priest, knowing very well that he will be caught, goes to a certain place in order to hear the confession of a dying American bandit and the priest suffers through his choices. Similarly, we find King David, the Biblical model for the present parallel study, falling into the sins of adultery and murder, bringing thereby great calamities on himself and his people. David is considered to be a man after the Lord's own heart, even despite his murder of Uriah and adultery with Bethsheba. He is the author of many of the Psalms and the repentance made by David through his confession is thus: "I have sinned against the Lord" (Ps. 51.13).

In spite of the personal weaknesses, and the constant debate between the whisky priest and the lieutenant of the law, representing the Church and the State respectively, the anonymous priest in *The Power and the Glory* proceeds towards the supreme level of existence and embraces his ultimate victory in martyrdom. It is a parallel study of the protagonist, whisky-priest with King David, comparing their inner struggles and spiritual conflicts. Through *The Power and the Glory*, Greene describes the spiritual conflicts of the whisky priest as a means to sanctification. Thus, the spiritual conflict of the whisky priest, throughout his missionary life, during the time of religious persecution is analyzed in comparison with the Biblical model, King

David in the third chapter.

Greene's novel, *The End of the Affair* leads the readers to the heights of sublime level and the experience of celestial bliss. One finds the real sense of sinner-saint paradox, through the mysterious life of Sarah Miles, especially at the end of her life. The novel explores the theme of sin and salvation. It is set in war time and was first published in 1951 in England. There is a three-way conflict between love of self, love of man, and love of God in the novel and within this setting, Greene explores the themes of love and hate. The central character of the novel is a married woman, Sarah Miles, the wife of a civil servant, Henry Miles. She has an adulterous love affair with a middle-aged novelist Maurice Bendrix. From the very beginning of the affair itself, Bendrix has fears that their affair will end one day. She loves Bendrix passionately but when he is knocked out by a bomb-blast, she is ready to give up her lust for Bendrix, if God brings him back to life. Her prayer is answered and Bendrix recovers. Ever since, Sarah is in a mental conflict in her attempt to resist her lover. At last, she gives herself up to God and believes in Him earnestly. God reaches out to Sarah in her sinful state and she surrenders herself to God. Bendrix realizes that Sarah has broken off her love-affair with him and is avoiding him for the sake of her private vow with God. She feels a sublime love for him. The affair ends on Bendrix's realization that Sarah's lover was God and it is exposed only after her death through a series of miracles establishing her sainthood. Bendrix begins to believe in God and gets an awareness of God's existence.

The story of Jesus' feet getting anointed with tears and perfume by an anonymous 'sinful woman' is taken from the Gospel according to St. Luke, in the Bible. Simon, one of the Pharisees, who in fact wanted the honor of hosting this famous rabbi, invites Jesus for dinner. The 'sinful woman' has heard that Jesus would be there, and she brings an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stands behind him at his feet weeping, she kneels down and begins to wet his feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair, kisses them and pours perfume on them. Jesus then declares that her many sins have been forgiven. But, the woman's sins were actually forgiven even before she came to Simon's house. She comes with perfume, weeps, and kisses Jesus' feet, because she has already been forgiven and God reached out to her. In the words of G.B. Caird, "Her love was not the ground of a pardon she had come to seek, but the proof of a pardon she had come to acknowledge" (115). Jerome Kodell also observes in *The Gospel According to Luke*, "the woman has already been forgiven her sins; that is evident because of her love. She would not be able to show such love unless she had first accepted love (forgiveness, acceptance)" (47). One may believe that 'the sinful woman' comes again because she knows well that she is forgiven, and wants to express her love and gratitude.

The character analysis of Sarah and the anonymous 'sinful woman' in the Bible, with a parallel study on the theme of suffering and sanctity is done in the fourth chapter. We find the 'sinful woman' in the Holy Bible, enjoying inner peace and joy at the feet of Jesus, while washing the feet with her tears. Similarly, as Sarah renounces the worldly pleasures once and forever, she enjoys Celestial Bliss at the feet of God, after undergoing the process of sanctification at the end of her life. The fourth

chapter is a detailed analysis of the same.

The fifth and final chapter serve the purpose of ‘retrospect’ and evaluates the observations in the previous chapters including the summing up of all, based on the title justification of the research work. It also evaluates Greene’s concept of good and evil from a Catholic point of view and explores how his fictional characters are confronted with the physical, mental and spiritual conflicts in life, in order to achieve something abstract and divine. By making parallelism with the Biblical models and observing and dwelling on similarities and dissimilarities on the particular ground, this study, of course, becomes quite elaborate. An attempt is made to establish the fact that the inner conflict and the concept of suffering will definitely lead a person of any age of time or of any place on earth to a miraculous experience of inner joy and peace through the process of sanctification.

Chapter II

Mental Agony in *The Heart Of The Matter*

> I suffer from nothing. I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to an end of all that too. Like all the rest. To the end of everything.
>
> - Graham Greene, *A Burnt-Out Case*, 16.

T. S. Eliot's words from *Baudelaire*, regarding Man's salvation and damnation are remarkable with regard to the novel *The Heart Of The Matter*, where the protagonist undergoes severe inner conflict between these two realities: "It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation"(*Selected Essays*, 377). The novel, *The Heart of the Matter* reveals Graham Greene's staunch belief in the Roman Catholic faith. It occupies a unique place in the fiction of Graham Greene. Like Greene himself, who was a Catholic convert, in this novel, the protagonist Major Scobie gets converted to Roman Catholicism in order to marry Louise. According to Roman Catholic faith and its teachings, regular receiving of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and attending the Holy Mass and Communion with God are very important. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, if a sinner goes to Communion in a state of sin, it leads to his damnation:

> According to the Church's command, after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year. Anyone who is aware of having

> committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. (Catechism, 281)

The Heart of the Matter is the story of an exceptional personality, named Scobie, who has been presented to us as extraordinary, in his relationship with his wife Louise, with his mistress Helen, with a Syrian trader and merchant, named Yusef, and above all, in his relationship with God. The novel mainly deals with Scobie's attitude to his wife, to his mistress, and his attitude to God. Scobie is split within, between the forces of good and evil and no one can miss the mental agony in the character of Scobie. John Atkins describes Scobie as "a distorted reflection of his creator, a man who cannot disguise or hide his feelings" (159). This novel is supposed to have been written by Greene during a period of his distress, as we learn from his *Ways of Escape*:

> Work was not made easier because the booby traps I had heedlessly planted in my private life were blowing up in turn. I had always thought that war would bring death as a solution . . . but here I was alive, the carrier of unhappiness to people I loved . . . what I really dislike of the book is the memory of personal anguish. As Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "A writer's temperament is continually making him do things he can never repair." (WE.124)

Greene also adds that like Major Scobie, the protagonist of the novel, he himself seriously considered suicide during this unhappy period.

This chapter is a parallel study of the problem of inner conflict suffered by Major Scobie, the protagonist of *The Heart of the Matter* with the inner struggle experienced by Samson, the Biblical model selected for the analysis. The characteristics of the fictional hero, Major Scobie of *The Heart of the Matter*, and the Biblical model, Samson are to be analyzed against their background, their profession and vocation. Their constant inner struggle will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter proposes to analyze the mental agony and the spiritual conflict between good and evil in a secular character, Scobie, of *The Heart of the Matter*. The mental agony of the protagonist is the focus in the novel and the conflict between the individual and the Orthodox religious concept has been featured and analyzed along with the parallel study of the Biblical model, Samson. Both the internal and the external conflicts within the characters and their willingness to die for the sake of others and their own martyrdoms are discussed in the chapter. *The Heart of the Matter* is the story of a secular character, named Scobie, who is depicted as a sympathetic character in his relationship with his wife Louise, with his mistress Helen, and in his relationship with God. Scobie's mental agony is seen from Greene's own spiritual conflicts and religious attitudes. The Biblical model selected for the parallel study is Samson, who is the last Judge of Israel. God delivered Israel, the chosen people of Yahweh, from the hands of Philistines. Samson is used as the divine instrument for the purpose. While fulfilling the great task given by God, Samson suffers severe mental and physical pain and struggle. The critical assessment of Greene's protagonist, Major

Scobie and the Biblical model, Samson is done in the chapter with their background, their profession and the divine call.

As far as Samson's background is concerned, he is the last Judge in the history of Israel. God delivers Israel, the selected people from the hands of Philistines, by the mighty power God gives to Samson. He is one of the judges in the Old Testament, who has great physical strength and God raises him up for the sole purpose of beginning the deliverance from Philistine oppression. The process is completed under the leadership of Samuel, Saul, and David; but it really begins with the tremendous impact of Samson's physical power. While fulfilling the great task entrusted upon him by God, Samson undergoes a period of constant physical and mental struggle. He is of the village of Zorah and of the tribe of Dan, from the southern coastal lands called Dan, bordering the Philistine territory. He is the first Nazirite specifically mentioned in *The Bible* (Judg. 13.3-5, Num. 6.1-21), and the last judge after having judged Israel for twenty years. Samson's mother was barren, but suddenly the Lord appears to inform her that she will have a son who is to be dedicated to Him from birth (Judg. 13.3-14). He was to be a Nazarite from the womb. A Nazarite means a man completely dedicated to God. The Levites were selected by God to do His service, but a special provision was made for Israelites other than Levites to serve God. This was done under the provisions of a Nazarite vow. We read of it in the book of Numbers chapter 6:

> And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate *themselves* to

> vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate *themselves* unto the Lord; He shall separate *himself* from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine . . . which he separateth *himself* unto the Lord, he shall be holy, *and* shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. (Num. 6.1-5)

Samson is specially selected for the purpose of fulfilling God's will to save His own people from the rivals, who worship idol gods and goddesses. Samson is in fact an instrument of God, but later in his adulthood he gives up his vowed life and is afflicted by evil spirit.

Both Scobie and Samson are found weak in their personal life; but they were sincere and dedicated to their duty and at the end of their life, they may be said to have attained martyrdom. Scobie dies for the happiness and safety of others; whereas, Samson dies as the redeemer to Israel. The two characters selected for the observation and parallel study in this chapter, invite the attention of the readers into the depth of their constant mental agony before reaching the end. Graham Greene has depicted the mental agony of Scobie with utmost care and Scobie's character-sketch will give a real account of the same.

The Heart of the Matter is concerned with various themes like Catholicism, guilt, suffering, death and salvation. The novel focuses on the internal and external struggle of man for liberation. This study concentrates on the mental agony and the spiritual afflictions in the hero as well as in the author. According to Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, the setting of the novel is based on the personal experience of the author as has been originally recorded in a travel-book. In her book, *Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter*, Mesnet says: "In *The Heart of the Matter*, he seems at last to

have

succeeded in delivering himself of the long contemplated theme of Africa" (28). Mesnet here emphasizes the divine process of salvation thus: "It was for this world that Christ had died: the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death . . . it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt" (75). The process of conversion and repentance is described by Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son and his Merciful Father. The free will of the son, the abandonment of his Father's house, the worldly enjoyment, the extreme miserable life, and his reflection on the past, his repentance and decision to confess his guilt before his beloved Father, the journey back, the Father's generosity and love, etc., are the various steps to real conversion. The Church teaches us that only the heart of Christ, who knows the depths of his Father's love, could reveal to us His mercy in a simple and beautiful way.

In this novel, while giving a psychological analysis of Scobie's pity, Greene tries to point out how far Scobie's actions based on pity can be justified by the Christian doctrine. O'Brien supports this observation in his study of the novel: "*The Heart of the Matter* is a novel about the progress of pity" (58). As Greene explains both evil and suffering in theological terms, Scobie is openly concerned with realities of salvation and damnation. Being a Catholic, he knows that he is a sinner, who is tormented by his constant awareness of sin. Greene seems to be interested in the interaction of the private and public lives of his characters and this dual tendency is depicted through Scobie in this novel. Thus Joseph Kurismmoottil observes in his book, *Heaven and Hell on Earth: "*. . . the dual tendency of Scobie's personality is brought out convincingly in his reaction to his daughter's death years ago" (105). John

Spurling in *Graham Greene*, is, in a way, right in comparing the author with the protagonist of the novel: “Greene’s own father died while he was in Sierra Leone. The news came in two telegrams delivered in the wrong order, the first saying his father was dead, the second that he was seriously ill. Scobie also in Sierra Leona, receives the news of his daughter’s death away in England in the same distressing way” (40).

In his introduction to *The Heart of the Matter,* Greene explains about his characters. Before he opens *The Heart of the Matter,* Greene says that he had no idea of Major Scobie in those days. It was a young north country priest, who instilled this idea into Greene’s imagination and inspired him to begin with the story. Greene does believe that man is not only doomed to sin but also capable of salvation. Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, in her book, *Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter*, has asserted this: “he believes in the universality and inevitability of suffering and sin, in a world that weighs so heavily upon us that only the grace of God can lift the load” (5).

The major conflict in *The Heart of the Matter* becomes that of the individual against the orthodox religious concept. K. S. Subramaniam in *Graham Greene*, says: “it is in the blending of religion and modern psychology that Greene’s achievement lies”(9). Greene thus portrays the mental agony and the sense of guilt of Scobie in the light of the modern human psychology and the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Scobie’s suffering is pictured to be more of the mind than of the body. Thus suggests Subramaniam: “The suffering is the result of the evil lust which is an off-shoot of his pity” (71). Scobie, the hero of *The Heart of the Matter*, is crushed between the age of religion and the modern age and is caught between duty and desire. *The Heart of the Matter* challenges Scobie’s commitment to his job and his efficiency and policing

power. Scobie is quite aware of what his duty requires, and he believes that it is a vocation demanding discernment and a strong sense of justice. While responding to Helen Rolt's doubt about her stamp album, he replies, "That's my job. I'm a policeman" (HM. 140). Maria Couto asserts that "Scobie stands revealed as a man overwhelmingly conscious of his office in the sense of responsibility. The novel does not explore the ineffectiveness of his role as arbiter of justice" (80). Scobie wants happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself. He prays to God for his own death before causing and giving unhappiness to others. Perhaps people do not struggle too much for the happiness of others. From this novel one draws a sense of love and pity for the hero's predicament that is augmentedly rapported by the simplicity and clarity in the writing.

The novel is the story of damnation and salvation of Major Scobie, a middle-aged man who is serving as Deputy Commissioner of Police, in a British Colony in West Africa at the beginning of World War II. He has become a Catholic after his marriage with a devout Catholic woman, Louise. Scobie is so fair to everyone that his own boss, the police commissioner refers to him as 'Scobie the Just'. Over the years, though love has turned to pity, he not only pities Louise, but feels responsible for her unhappiness after the death of her child. As a policeman, Scobie finds it natural to feel responsible for the security and happiness of others. Though very pure and noble at heart, Scobie becomes corrupt out of pity for his wife and others. His wife Louise wants to go to South Africa for a holiday and for her passage he borrows money from a Syrian trader, Yusef, who is suspected to carry an illicit trade in diamonds. Scobie,

there after, is hauntingly blackmailed by Yusef. Unfortunately, Scobie's illegal activities lead to the death of his devoted servant, Ali. The greatest turning point in the life of Scobie comes at the requirement of his duties to receive the survivors of a British ship torpedoed by a German submarine during the World War II. These survivors include a young widow, Helen Rolt and, in the absence of his wife, Scobie falls in love with her, who happens to live in a hut near the house of Scobie. His wife, Louise returns unexpectedly as soon as she gets the information about this relationship. She then deliberately asks Scobie to accompany her to the Holy Mass and Communion. Being a Catholic, he cannot go to the Communion without confession and repentance, since it would mean damnation. Christ taught that the bond of Christian marriage is unbreakable and forbade divorce, saying: "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19.6). We find in the Gospel, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark. 10.11-12).

There is severe pain and unbearable conflict in Scobie's mind between his love for Louise and Helen, and his love for God. The only solution that he finds is to commit suicide in order to remain faithful to all the three - his wife, his mistress and God. Crowning all, he also has another intention of keeping himself away from anymore sins. Here, Greene portrays him as a hunted man, who actually dies in a state of mortal sin. Moreover, Scobie knows well what he is doing, and does it deliberately, with the full consent of his will. He commits the unpardonable sin of despair and thus, he is damned for sure. At the end of the novel, Greene insists through Father Rank,

upon the

‘appalling strangeness’ of the mercy of God. Louise thinks that her husband is damned, but Father Rank holds out hope for Scobie: “For goodness’ sake, Mrs. Scobie, don’t imagine you - or I - know a thing about God’s mercy . . . The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn’t know what goes on in a single human heart” (HM. 272). As B. P. Lamba assumes: “Scobie’s love is a pendulum swinging between pity and responsibility” (30). Scobie is a good man, but his main weakness is that he cannot hurt those whom he loves. Alan Price comments: “The chief character in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), Scobie seeks escape from a world that has become soiled and from the intolerable complications and demands of love that is hurting his wife and his mistress” (29).

The scene of the novel is a West African port in war time. Scobie, as a Deputy Commissioner of police, is one of the oldest inhabitants among the white officials. He likes the place as well as the people, in a peculiar way. As the novel opens, one finds that he has been passed over for promotion. In the words of John Atkins, “. . . he was a weak man who could not hide his weakness” (159). This failure for promotion ultimately leads him and his wife to humiliation and depression. In order to get out of this situation, his wife, Louise goes to South Africa. Scobie fulfils her desire by borrowing money from Yusef, a smuggler. As a result of this association, Scobie gets involved in the illegal trade of diamonds. Meanwhile, there comes Helen, an English bride, widowed in the ship-wreck. In her, Scobie sees his future mistress. He is also reminded of his dead child, when Helen was carried on a stretcher, clutching a stamp album, after being saved from the ship-wreck. Another moving scene which comes to

Scobie's mind is, the six-year-old girl at her deathbed. The child mistakes Scobie for her own drowned father. Scobie clearly identifies this girl with his own daughter who died at that age. Here, one finds Scobie's selfless love and pity. Like the whisky priest in the *Power and the Glory,* who prays for his daughter Brigitta, Scobie, unable to bear the heavy uneven breathing of this substitute child prays to God, "Father, look after her. Give her peace' . . . "Father, he prayed, 'give her peace. Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace'. The sweat broke out on his hands. Father . . . " (HM. 125). Scobie's prayer is an offering of a man who stands naked before God with nothing in his hands, expressing his total surrender and belief in God.

Christ prayed for the mankind and while He was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, He sweated blood: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke. 22.44). The unbearable sight of misery in the jungle hospital, especially that of the dying child who has survived forty days and nights in the open boat - "that was the mystery, to reconcile that with the love of God" (HM.121) - shakes Scobie and reminds him of his own daughter who died when he was away in Africa.

In this context, Gangeshwar Rai's words are relevant in order to identify Scobie's pity: "His pity reaches universal proportions and, like the whisky-priest, he comes to believe in the inevitability of suffering in the world" (48). Scobie realizes that suffering is inescapable and he says: "to be a human being one had to drink the cup" (HM. 125). Greene tries to show the human sympathy and understanding through this incident. Greene sees the agony of Christ in Scobie and shows his great anguish: "This sweat poured down his face and tasted in his mouth as salt as tears" (HM. 125).

Although Scobie is away when his own child dies, he is convinced of his Catholic faith and accepts the cup that he has to drink, as Christ asked the two sons of Zebedee, who were His would-be followers to share the suffering of Christ: “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matt. 20.22).

Greene reflects his concept of suffering through Scobie: “He had been in Africa when his own child died. He had always thanked God that he had missed that” (HM. 125). According to John Atkins, “It became clear that Scobie is riddled with pity and a desire to help the victims of injustice. His pity is his weakness, for there is no place for it in the official routine” (159). This proves the real human predicament in the character of Scobie. Through him, Greene portrays the individual’s realization of moral responsibility as a Christian. Though he is a responsible man, his responsibility as a policeman, goes even beyond the law. Henry Donaghy, in his study on Greene suggests: “Major Scobie, is a virtuous man whose *hamartia* or tragic flaw, lies in the excess of pity he possesses” (55). Greene tries to show more psychological insight in the character of Scobie, throughout the novel. Scobie realizes that his sense of responsibility, the desire to carry the burden of others’ suffering, involves despair. It is as though he is aware of his own fate:

> Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim. It is, one is told, the unforgivable sin, but it is a sin the corrupt or evil man never practises. He always has hope. He never reaches the freezing-point of knowing absolute failure. Only the man of goodwill carries always in his

heart this capacity for Damnation. (HM. 60)

According to Mesnet, Scobie is a weak character unable to face his responsibilities. In the novel, Scobie seeks to treat suicide, as an act of kindness and self-sacrifice. By his death, he justifies that he will be liberating his lover, his wife, and God from his sinful presence: “They are ill with me and I can cure them. And you too, God - you are ill with me . . . You’ll be better off if you lose me once and for all” (HM. 258). According to Kulshrestha, “He is a good man betrayed into evil by an obsession, ‘the horrible and horrifying emotion of pity’, which imposes contradictory obligations on him and brings him to an impasse” (98).

In the Holy Bible, we find that Samson was so fearsome to the Philistines that during his lifetime they avoided all invasions into the territory of Israel. Samson did begin the deliverance of God’s people from the hands of the Philistines. Before his birth, God set Samson apart for service to Him. God instructed Samson’s mother: “For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judg. 13.5). God began to work with Samson at an early age. And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson: “and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zo’rah and Esh’taol” (Judg. 13.24-25).

This Biblical model, Samson, is selected to make a parallel study with the protagonist, Scobie, the Police Commissioner, in Greene’s novel, *The Heart of the Matter*. There are several incidents that the readers may find comparable in the life

situations of both the characters. Being the first known Nazarite in the Bible, Samson is considered to be the chosen one for the liberation of Israel from the Philistines. While fulfilling the divine task of liberating God's chosen people, Samson undergoes, constant physical and mental struggle before he dies as the redeemer of Israel. The character selected for the parallel study, namely Scobie, has his constant mental agony till his death, similar to the same situations in the life of Samson.

There are various ways of judging this attitude. Cedric Watts, in *A Preface To Greene*, tries to render a hypothetical analysis of the possible reflections of God's thought process:

> Perhaps, we may suppose, God thinks: 'Scobie was altruistic; he laid down his life for those he loved. Even though, formally, he was committing a mortal sin, I'll be merciful. He deserves salvation. Let him go to Heaven.' Or, perhaps God thinks: 'Well, Scobie was trying to be altruistic, so although he appears to be committing a mortal sin, I'll be lenient: I'll sentence him to Purgatory, not Hell.' Perhaps God thinks: 'What arrogance! A mortal presumes to be helping me, the Omnipotent, by destroying the life that I have given. What pride! To hell with him!'. (98-99)

Greene once said that *The Heart of the Matter* was about a man who goes to Purgatory; later, he disliked the self-pitying Scobie. George Orwell in his essay, "The Sanctified Sinner" observes: "This cult of the sanctified sinner seems to me to be frivolous, and underneath it there probably lies a weakening of belief, for when people

really believed in Hell, they were not so fond of striking graceful attitudes on its brink" (CCE. 107).

Greene exploits one of the great paradoxes of Catholicism. On the one hand, it specifies mortal sins; on the other hand, it offers to such mortal sinners various means of avoiding entry to Hell. The first route is Confession accompanied by Contrition, and a sincere resolve not to sin again. Then the priest may absolve the sin, however grave. If an individual is dying, the presence of a priest, though extremely desirable, is not essential. At death's door a mortal sinner might repent; and if the repentance is sincere, God's grace might grant the sinner forgiveness as could be easily understood from the case of the thief crucified at the right side of Jesus Christ. According to Christian belief, the mercy of God has no limit. Greene's belief is expressed through the confessor of Rose in the *Brighton Rock* that Pinkie may have been saved at the last moment by the 'appalling strangeness of the mercy of God': "He said, You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone . . . appalling strangeness of the mercy of God" (BR. 246). Greene seems to believe that even Pinkie with all his pride might have repented for all his sins and been forgiven by God during his fall from the cliff-edge to the sea.

Purgatory, according to Catholic belief, is a preparation for Heaven, and many sinners atone themselves by years of suffering in purgatory. It is an abode of purification, in which souls experience both the pain of loss and extreme pain of sense. The reader is led to consider what will happen to the protagonist in his after life: Does Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory await? God's judgment of a soul may be far different from any that we human beings may expect. Greene's view on this is

reflected in D. Parkinson's *The Graham Greene Film Reader: Mornings in the Dark*, "when he said on one occasion that Pinkie 'goes to hell' and on another occasion, 'I don't think that Pinkie was guilty of mortal sin'" (528). This idea is supported by Greene in *The Other Man*: "I don't believe in Hell; if God exists . . . I can't bring myself to imagine that a creature conceived by Him can be so evil as to merit eternal punishment. His grace must intervene at some point" (OM. 161). Greene thus portrays the mental agony and the sense of guilt of Scobie in the light of the modern human psychology and the doctrine of the Church. Scobie's suffering is pictured to be more of the soul than of the body. Subramaniam writes: "The suffering is the result of the evil lust which is an off-shoot of his pity" (71). It is apt to quote the philosophy of Buddha as mentioned by Kurismmoottil: "Desire is the root-cause of suffering, decreed Buddha. Love and pity are both expressions of a desire, and desire robs a person of freedom, desire is binding and Scobie would not be bound to a weak world" (104). Marie-Beatrice Mesnet comments: "The light of the infinite love of God is shed over all Greene's characters. Nowhere in the Scriptures is there a text that directly states that any man is consigned to the torments of Hell. What we do know with certainty is that the thief crucified with Jesus . . . was the first to whom the joy of heaven was promised" (108).

Scobie sacrifices his life for the sake of those whom he loves. Yet he makes a last attempt at prayer: "O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them" (HM. 225). Urbashi Barat states that suicide is not always and necessarily a defeat. She also justifies the suicide committed by Major Scobie: " . . . and Scobie identifies

himself with Christ as he kills himself so as not to cause others further pain . . . is not merely a means of escape; it is also the consequence of their opening themselves to suffering because they have known what it is to love" (29).

Greene believes in the mysterious power of prayer. The Holy Bible assures that faith can move even mountains: "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart . . . he shall have . . . What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark. 11.22-24). We find the prayers offered by Greene characters are answered in different life situations. In *The Power and the Glory,* the priest offers a prayer for his illegitimate daughter, Brigitta, and the prayer is answered. In *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie, overwhelmed with pity for the child – a victim from the torpedoed ship – offers a prayer to God, and Scobie's prayer is answered: the child has the peace of death and a release from suffering and Scobie's peace is taken away for the rest of his earthly career. This is the major turning point in Scobie's life when pity deepens into horror. In *The End of the Affair,* Sarah offers an unusual prayer to God for the rebirth of Bendrix, her lover in his critical situation, and her prayer is answered in a miraculous way. In the play, *The Potting Shed*, when James is hanging dead in the potting shed, his uncle, Father Callifer offers special prayers to restore his life and he comes back to life. Greene often refers to the Catholic belief in miracles and feels that even though these may seem improbable to modern man, they are possible in Christian faith. In *The Achievement of Graham Greene*, Grahame Smith tries to justify the transformation within Scobie, regarding his salvation even after his suicidal end:

> Scobie can see, feel and hear the suffering of Louise and Helen; in his internal dialogue with God he points out that he can't . . . Is Scobie saved in the split second as his body crashes to the ground or must the act of self-destruction stand as a final damnation? Who can say? My stress would fall on the nature of a man who dies with the word 'love' on his lips. Whatever moral errors and spiritual sins Scobie has committed stemmed from love . . . In loving God's creatures to such an extent, doesn't Scobie justify Father Rank's final judgement?. (102)

It is through Father Rank's final judgement – "I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God" (HM. 272) – that the readers understand and realize about the mysterious intervention of God's mercy.

Scobie's wife, Louise for whom he feels only pity and responsibility, urges him to allow her to go on holiday to South Africa, to escape the situation. In fact, Scobie is worried about his promise to Louise, that he would be able to raise the money for her. Though Scobie does not love his wife, his concern and pity for Louise is seen in the expression of Roger Sharrock: "Scobie, no longer loves his wife Louise who has become neurotic and irritable after the death of the child, but he feels pity and responsibility for her" (61). In order to make Louise happy, Scobie says: "If I could just arrange for her happiness first" (HM. 85). When she loses her hope in the promise of her husband, Scobie brings surprise to her: "'It's better just to give up', she said . . . 'I'm letting her know that I shan't be going.' He spoke rapidly . . . 'write and tell her that you can go' . . . She said, 'Ticki, please don't promise something which can't

happen . . .' 'I wanted to give you your ticket. A surprise" (HM. 97). Though Scobie wants to be faithful to his wife, the relationship between Scobie and Louise is an unhappy one and ultimately leads to failure. Mesnet refers to Louise's neurosis: "Louise is a weak character, a neurotic unable to overcome her strong dissatisfaction and take her share of the load instead of making continuous demands on others and especially on her husband" (32).

In the words of Kurismmottil, "Louise's scorn for her husband . . . in her view, is a chronic failure. Louise does not forgive her husband for not upholding her pride"(107). Greene pictures this unhappy relationship in a sympathetic manner. It is the scene of their lunch together before she leaves for South Africa which is remarkable for portraying their feelings:

> They seemed to be sitting miles apart separated by a waste of dishes. The food chilled on their plates and there seemed nothing to talk about except, 'I'm not hungry', 'Try and eat a little', 'I can't touch a thing', 'You ought to start off with a good meal,' an endless friendly bicker about food. . . .It seemed horrible to both of them that now they would be glad when the separation was complete. (HM. 100)

Mesnet also speaks of Louise, highlighting into her failure as a wife: "She is failure as a wife, and as a woman unattractive, disliked, alienating others by her patronizing attitude and her blunders, a pitiable creature unable to inspire love" (33).

Although Scobie has a Catholic wife, out of pity he falls in love with a nineteen-year-old girl, a pathetic young widow, who is brought to the colony as a survivor from a torpedoed ship. As a result, one finds that love is confused with pity in

Scobie's heart. As Paul O' Prey remarks, "Like Rose and the whisky priest(and Peguy), Scobie deliberately chooses to damn himself out of love for others" (82). The girl's misery makes Scobie feel more sympathetic. Though the victim is not very pretty, he cannot just stand and watch her perish and she is very grateful for his concern and sympathy. Out of pity, he begins an affair with Helen Rolt. He is blackmailed by the Syrian trader, Yusef, which results in the murder of his loyal servant boy, Ali. Thus says Wyndham: "the incorruptible man sees himself caught up in corruption" (19).

One may find an element of pride in Scobie's pity, for he distrusts God, doubting His capacity to save His own creatures. Even at the end, just before committing suicide, Scobie hears God's voice in silence asking him to keep his trust in God; but he feels hopeless, and unable to take a decision he responds: "No. I don't trust you. I've never trusted you" (HM. 259). De Vitis here justifies Scobie's act of suicide and compares it with that of Othello in Shakespeare's play, "Like Othello, Scobie loves not wisely but too well. The human entanglement in which he finds himself admits only one solution - suicide . . . Scobie may have killed himself, but he may have repented in the moment before death" (92).

Though Scobie is an unhappy person, he is very much concerned with happiness. There are mainly two remarkable moments in this novel when Scobie enjoys happiness. The first is just after his wife has left for South Africa when:

> Scobie went out into the dripping darkness holding his big striped umbrella . . . except for the sound of the rain, on the road, on the roofs, on the

> umbrella, there was absolute silence: only the dying moan of the sirens continued for a moment or two to vibrate within the ear. It seemed to Scobie later that this was the ultimate border he had reached in happiness: being in darkness, alone, with the rain-falling, without love or pity. (HM. 134-5)

One is reminded of Greene's own feelings in Liberia as he describes in his *Journey Without Maps*: "And yet all the time, below the fear and the irritation, one was aware of a curious lightness and freedom; one might drink, that was a temporary weakening; but one was happy all the same; one had crossed the boundary into country really strange; surely one had gone deep this time" (JWM. 132).

Scobie's second moment of happiness leads him to his own damnation. As he leaves the Nissen hut, having found and fallen in love with Helen Rolt, he feels happy:

> They both had an immense sense of security: they were friends who could never be anything else than friends - they were safely divided by a dead husband, a living wife, a father who was a clergyman, a games mistress called Helen, and years and years of experience. He said, 'Goodnight . . . He walked away, feeling an extraordinary happiness, but this he would not remember as happiness, as he would remember setting out in the darkness, in the rain alone. (HM. 140)

Scobie's relationship with his wife Louise seems an unhappy one, ultimately disastrous. In a way, Scobie is an honest man who is corrupted by his sense of responsibility for the happiness of others and as a result he becomes himself an instrument that causes the pain.

The Heart of the Matter, while it suggests Scobie's commitment to his job, also challenges his efficiency and competence. Scobie is quite self-conscious about what his work demands and he believes that it is a vocation requiring discernment and a strong sense of justice; so much so that, when asked by Helen Rolt how he knows about her stamp-album, he replies that he is a policeman. Gangeshwar Rai in his *Graham Greene: An Existential Approach*, says that, "Scobie is torn by a conflict of loyalties - loyalty to his profession, loyalty to his religion and loyalty to his innate humanism. He betrays his government and violates the rules of his church" (52).

Scobie's inability to break off his affair with Helen recalls the feeling of Pinkie in *Brighton Rock* having gone too far with no way back. Thus says Scobie: "He felt as though he were turning his back on peace for ever. With his eyes open, knowing the consequences, he entered the territory of lies without a passport for return"(HM. 199). Scobie's relationship with Helen sets in motion the attitude of a man trying to cover his tracks. Subramaniam refers to this view: "Greene has great faith in God's grace and points out in these Catholic novels that even the smallest act of faith or love is infinitely precious to God and will work for the salvation of the least worthy of us" (31). As he cannot persuade himself to put his own soul, he is unable to promise in the confessional to avoid seeing Helen again. He does not realize what others know and the extent to which he is being observed: returning one night from Helen's hut he meets a knowing Wilson: "Scobie, Wilson exclaimed and the man turned. 'Hullo, Wilson,' Scobie said, 'I didn't know you lived up here.' 'I'm sharing with Harris,'

Wilson said. . . . ‘I have been taking a walk,’ Scobie said unconvincingly, ‘I couldn’t sleep.’ It seemed to Wilson that Scobie was still a novice in the world of deceit”: (HM. 168).

Scobie’s human relationships are all based on pity. “He couldn’t shut his eyes or his ears to any human need of him” (HM. 187). His sense of responsibility moves away from “the beautiful and the graceful and the intelligent. They could find their own way. It was the face for which nobody would go out of his way, the face that would never catch the covert look, the face which would soon be used to rebuffs and indifference that demanded his allegiance” (HM. 159). His discontented wife and his pathetic mistress are the chief victims demanding fidelity. After swearing to preserve his wife Louise’s happiness, he accepts another and contradictory responsibility, his mistress Helen’s happiness. Scobie begins by pitying one woman and ends by pitying God. Meanwhile, this feeling of responsibility and pity troubles him and he wonders “if one knew . . . the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? If one reached what they called the heart of the matter?” (HM. 124). If Scobie pities someone, it may be for the sake of a woman or for the sake of a child. It is found that Scobie is abnormally sensitive to the whims of women, giving too much respect for them, and is emotionally submissive to them.

According to the Catholic Church, Scobie is not permitted to have a mistress while his wife is alive. Therefore, he violates the commandment of the Church by committing adultery. Similarly, Samson, the Biblical model for the present analysis also goes against the traditions of Israel. Even before his birth, he is set apart by God for the Divine plan of liberating the Israel from their enemies. But, later in adulthood,

Samson is attracted to a young Philistine woman. According to Deuteronomy chapter seven, God had forbidden His people to marry the indigenous peoples of Canaan, because of their pagan religion: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them . . . For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods” (Deut. 7.3-4). Here Samson goes to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines:

> And Samson went down to Tim’nath, and saw a woman in Tim’nath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Tim’nath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife . . . But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel (Judg. 14.1-4).

God is behind this on the part of Samson. When Samson is on his way to visit the girl, an unusual incident takes place: “Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Tim’nath, and came to the vineyards of Tim’nath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done” (Judg. 14.5-6). The significance of this event set the stage for a confrontation between Samson and the Philistines. Samson does not tell his parents of this event. He begins to employ some of this intelligence with an unsolvable riddle. His mind is used to fulfill God’s intention, seeking an

occasion against the Philistines:

> And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. (Judg. 14.8-9)

Samson holds a feast to celebrate the marriage. This shows that his parents are wealthy. Then the Philistines asked him for the riddle: “And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle” (Judg. 14.14). The Philistines knew they could not solve it without getting the secret out of his wife: “they said unto Samson’s wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father’s house with fire . . . he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?” (Judg. 14.16).

When Samson gave the riddle, he knew well that it was unsolvable. But it ruined the wedding feast. His wife was miserable, and plagued him incessantly for the answer. “And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people” (Judg. 14.17). When the final day was at hand, the men of the city were present before Samson and said:

> What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. (Judg. 14.18-19).

After Samson found out his wife had been given by her father to another man, he made this personal mistake of betrayal into a national dispute against the Philistine people:

> And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives. (Judg. 15.4-5)

The destruction was far and wide. Who else could have thought of such an effective method of destruction? This was a massive loss of crops for the Philistines. The Philistines retaliated. “Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the Tim’nite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire” (Judg. 15.6). Samson now set out to deal with this murder. “And Samson

said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock E'tam" (Judg. 15.7-8). Samson knows this will lead to a serious impact on the enemies and so he finds protection in a secure place. Samson was indeed fulfilling God's purpose. He commented: "With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men" (Judg. 15.16). Samson was more than a deliverer. "And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years" (Judg. 15.20).

Thus one can conclude that love is the cause and final answer to evil. However, in Scobie, love plays a dangerous role. Instead of loving his wife, more faithfully, he tends to strengthen his affair with Helen: "My darling - I love you more than myself, more than my wife, more than God I think. I am trying very hard to tell the truth. I want more than anything in the world to make you happy. . . I love you" (HM. 181). Unexpectedly, Louise, who gets information from Yusef, about the love affair of Scobie with Helen, plans to return. Mesnet thus remarks: "His apparent fidelity to his wife was in fact already a betrayal" (72).

In addition to this, Yusef informs Scobie that Helen's boy is also in the Syrian's employ and that he is now in possession of a compromising letter that Scobie has written to Helen. For Louise, Scobie's outlook is transparent - "he has a terrible sense of responsibility" (HM. 79) and she has already known of his affair with Helen. Louise's control over Scobie intensifies upon her return from South Africa; in her desire to go with him to Communion, he feels "as though he were being urged by a kindly and remorseless gaoler to dress for execution" (HM. 247). She will not be put

off easily and

continues to pursue him: ". . . darling, let's go to Communion together tomorrow morning.' 'If you want to ,' he said. It was the moment he had known would come. With bravado, to show that his hand was not shaking, he took down a glass. 'Drink?' 'It's too early dear,' Louise said; he knew she was watching him closely like all the others" (HM. 219). Even her appearance of cheerful acceptance seems to him like a deceitful mask: "Darling, she said, 'if you aren't well, stay where you are. I don't want to drag you to Mass.' But the excuse it seemed to him was also a trap. He could see where the turf had been replaced over the hidden stakes. If he took the excuse she offered he would have all but confessed his guilt" (HM. 223).

Scobie knows well that in human relations kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths. He involves himself in what he always knows is a vain struggle to retain the lies. "Don't be absurd, darling. Who do you think I love if I don't love you?" (HM. 58). In this way, Scobie certainly loses his peace just to make others happy. Maria Couto in her observation on this fictional character of Greene, expresses her view thus, "Scobie appears to lose control, in fact, to lose faith in the whole 'act' demanded of him by his profession" (75). The happiness that Scobie can enjoy is very limited. He realizes that his relationship with Helen is not authentic. Thus he regrets and reflects over the letter he has written to Helen: "Why did I write 'more than God?' She would have been satisfied with 'more than Louise' . . . He whispered, 'O God, I have deserted you. Do not you desert me'" (HM. 181). Like Scobie in this novel, we find Samson in the Holy Bible loses his peace and the divine grace for the happiness

and safety of others. The following incident will give a true picture of Samson's personal weaknesses and how he goes against his vowed life.

The incident we read of Samson's visit to the Philistine city of Gaza seems relevant in the Biblical context, which is also applicable to this novel. The Bible says nothing of the purpose of his visit, but whatever may be the reason, there in Gaza he encounters a harlot. "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and went in unto her" (Judg. 16.1). The only accommodations for visitors in alien cities were various inns. These inns always housed harlots and the Philistines were informed that Samson was at an inn: "*And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city" (Judg. 16.2-3).

Samson did not bother to break down the city gate. He simply ripped the entire structure from the ground and carried it away. Toward the end of the 20-year period as Judge, Samson becomes involved with another Philistine woman. Her greed and mercenary spirit finally caused Samson's death;

> And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred

pieces of silver. (Judg. 16.4-5)

So Delilah kept on pestering Samson for the secret of his great strength but Samson never revealed the truth. At last being endangered by the rulers of the Philistines, she said to him, “How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*” ((Judg. 16.15). With such pain and anguish, she urged him day after day until he was tired to death. So he told her everything. “There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any *other* man” (Judg. 16.17). Thus Samson revealed the secret of his great strength, giving himself up in the hands of the Philistines and invited his own disaster, without his knowledge.

As O’Brien suggests, “brooding over the disaster, Scobie feels the weight of all this suffering on his shoulders as a new responsibility” (67). When Scobie sleeps with his mistress Helen, for the first time, he expresses himself with sadness: “Was it the butterfly that died in the act of love? But human beings were condemned to consequences” (HM. 161). According to Lamba: “All his activities show that the method adopted by Scobie for attaining happiness for others and peace for himself are the very means that result in suffering for himself and ultimately destroy him” (30). Similarly we find Samson, the Biblical character breaking his vow and submitting himself to his enemies only for the happiness of others. After extracting the secret of

his great strength from the Philistine harlot named Delilah, the Philistines attack and ill-treat Samson in a severe manner.

When Delilah realizes that he has told her everything, she sends word to the rulers of the Philistines to come back once more, for, Samson has revealed the real secret to her. So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. Having put him to sleep on her lap, she calls a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so begins to subdue him, and his strength leaves him:

> And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him . . . the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. (Judg. 16.19-21)

It is not because of the hair that he lost his strength; but because of the part of the Nazaritic vow. The hair length was the symbol of that consecration. If the hair were cut the vow would be broken, and Samson could no longer receive God's intervention. Delilah had no intention of passing up the fortune offered to her.

The Philistines were not aware of the significance of the hair. They did not bother to keep it trimmed, as they saw he was no further threat. "Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven" (Judg. 16.22). They now chose to make public example of him. "Then the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand" (Judg. 16.23). They place Samson in their public stadium, where a huge crowd is present: "And Samson said unto the lad that

held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport" (Judg. 16.:26-27). Samson is utterly helpless without any strength to move about and calls out to the Lord like a miserable child. The prayer made by Samson at that depressed moment is so touching that the Lord answers him immediately:

> And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes'. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood . . . of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. (Judg. 16.28-30)

Samson was a powerful instrument of God to fight against the rivals of Israel and win the battle. One may observe that Samson is powerful and strong only when he is filled with God's spirit and that the moment he violates his vows, the spirit of God leaves him. It should be noted well that Samson avenged himself of his blindness inflicted on him by the Philistines in and through his 'suicide' alone which was seemingly

endorsed by Yahweh the God, for becoming an instrument for the simultaneous mass massacre of the Philistines.

Scobie, in the novel becomes weak when he commits the sin of adultery and he cannot make a proper confession as he is not in a position to renounce it completely. Scobie's wife, Louise then wants to keep up his religious duties and asks him to go with her to Holy Communion. Being a Catholic, Scobie believes in the doctrine of confession. K. S. Subramaniam, in *Graham Greene: A Study*, gives a brief account of the sacramental grace:

> The Catholics believe in the doctrine of Confession. The church enjoins every Catholic who has reached the age of reason to confess once a year . . . The sacraments are the channels through which the fruits of the Redemption are applied to the individual soul. They are thus the channels of divine grace. Each sacrament was constituted by Christ for a particular purpose and each sacrament imparts a grace. . . .This grace is called sacramental grace. (28)

The Church invites every Catholic to confess one's sins in order to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. No member of the Church is freed from his obligation to confess his sins. According to the Catholic belief, a person may confess his sins to a priest who is a representative of God on earth. If he is in a state of mortal sin, he should not receive Holy Communion. Sin, redemption, and grace are the three fundamental ideas in the Christian religion. Christianity teaches us that through Adam's sin man has cut himself off from supernatural life. Christ's crucifixion has, however, assured mankind of its redemption. Grace provides the essential means to

the

individual soul, giving it eternal life by the merits of the Redeemer. Greene often refers to these Catholic concepts in his works.

Maria Couto's words prove right in explaining the inner conflict of Scobie: "Scobie's poignant awareness of the consequences of his actions illustrates the religious sense with greater conviction than the academic elaboration of Scobie's guilt in relation to the sacraments of confession and communion and the matter of his suicide" (77). Being in a state of mortal sin, Scobie does not agree to confess his sins. For a Christian it is cock-sure that suicide is a definite way to hell, and Scobie is well aware of this. Further**, c**ommitting suicide, he has also sinned against hope. Subramaniam's observation on man's faith and relationship to God is relevant in this context: "Sin and suffering are inevitable in this world from the point of view of the Christian religion. Greene's novels deal with the nature of sin, or guilt . . . that might redeem or absolve us from it. His novels arouse a profound sympathy . . . the most important thing in life is man's relationship to God" (10**).** According to Catholic doctrine, sin against hope is related to the loss of faith and thus is more serious than it is for anyone outside the Church. He can hope for salvation only by the divine mercy. Before committing the sin of suicide, Scobie feels depressed and thinks: "there is only one answer: to kneel down in the confessional and say, 'Since my last confession I have committed adultery so many times . . . to hear Father Rank telling me to avoid the occasion: never see the woman alone . . . And I to make my act of contrition, the promise 'never more to offend thee" (HM. 219).

Scobie longs for inner peace and the grace of God. As Kurismmottil suggests:

"*The Heart of the Matter* is the innate sinfulness of man and his need of divine mercy" (123). Scobie is obsessed with the constant awareness of his sin that he cannot get rid of, as he cannot avoid the occasion of sin. B. P. Lamba remarks: "Scobie has lost all hope, since he can not escape from the sin" (46). But then, he realizes his religious duty and attempts to make an act of contrition. As he waits for Father Rank to go into the confessional, he prays: "O God convince me, help me . . . 'O God', he said, 'if instead I should abandon you, punish me but let the others get some happiness" (HM. 220).

Scobie is a typical Greene hero who takes steps to satisfy his needs, and all he needs is "happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself" (HM.181). Scobie, however, has no chance for peace and happiness in this miserable world - they are always dreams of solitude, of quiet darkness: "being in darkness, alone with the rain falling, without love or pity" (HM. 135). Similarly, his efforts to arrange happiness for others result in suffering for him as well as for others.

The emotion of pity leads Scobie to deviate from his own way of life. The money he borrows for the passage of his wife puts him under an obligation undesirable for a Government servant. His affair with Helen involves him not only with human being but also with God. A voice within, the voice of God, pleads with him urging him to go on living:

> I am not Thou but simply you when you speak to me . . . All you have to do now is ring a bell, go into a box, confess . . . It's not repentance you lack, just a few simple actions: to go up to the Nissen hut and say good-bye. Or if you must, continue rejecting me but without lies anymore. Go to your

> house and say good-bye to your wife and live with your mistress . . . One of them will suffer, but can't you trust me to see that the suffering isn't too great?. (HM. 259)

Scobie, thus goes to Father Rank to confess his sins. He presents his sinful heart before the priest and reluctantly agrees to give up his adultery. When Father Rank asks him to avoid seeing her, he thinks: "I am cheating human beings every day I live, I am not going to try to cheat myself or God. He replied, It would be no good my promising that, Father" (HM.259). Father Rank then says:

> You must promise. You can't desire the end without desiring the means . . . I don't need to tell you surely that there's nothing automatic in the confessional or in absolution. It depends on your state of mind whether you are forgiven. It's no good coming and kneeling here unprepared. Before you come here you must know the wrong you've done . . . It's better to sin seventy times and repent each time than sin once and never repent. (HM. 221)

Though Scobie realizes his sinful state of mind, he is not ready to accept the advice of Father Rank, because, he does not want to hurt Helen by giving her up and so he cannot promise something that he is unable to do. In this situation, the priest refuses to give absolution. O'Brien observes:

> Louise urges Scobie to come to communion with her on Sunday: We learn later that it is a test, for she suspects the truth about Helen. Scobie is now in

> his last dilemma. He cannot go to Communion without Sacrilege, since he is in a state of mortal sin: he cannot be absolved of his sin unless he repents and breaks with Helen: At the same time, if he does not go to Communion, Louise will know the worst.(72).

Scobie, with the knowledge of his own damnation, goes to receive Holy Communion. His mental agony is vividly described by Greene: “Father Rank came down the steps from the altar bearing the Host. The saliva had dried in Scobie’s mouth: It was as though his veins had dried. He couldn’t look up: . . . But with open mouth he made one last attempt at prayer, ‘O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them’” (HM. 225). As De Vitis assumes, “Scobie’s struggle with himself and with the God of the Catholic Church forms the basis of the conflict” (87).

In the words of Paul O’Prey, “the communion shows not only Scobie’s weakness but also Louise’s ruthlessness, for ironically, she knows of her husband’s adultery, and uses the sacrament as a weapon: either he will confess his sin to the priest and give up his affair, or he will be forced to make an open declaration of it” (84). Scobie’s suffering in purgatory is probably God’s merciful response to his desire for love. Gangeshwar Rai remarks that “the sense of suffering for others dominates all thoughts of confession repentance. Scobie’s conduct emphasizes the ethical way of existing” (50).

As Scobie receives Holy Communion, one finds that Scobie invites the eternal damnation, just to avoid the pain on Louise. At the same time, his love and sense of responsibility for Helen are so strong that he cannot end their affair. Scobie, in a way, invites eternal damnation, by receiving the Holy Communion, in a state of mortal sin,

like Judas, who betrays Jesus after receiving the bread and wine from Him. Here, Scobie is shaken by a deep sense of horror by Louise's sudden return from South Africa and her insistence on receiving Communion, his being trapped into smuggling a package of diamonds, and being a half - conscious agent of his own native boy's murder. He is terribly shocked, and after that Scobie encounters God as the real living God, whose voice is heard from his own conscience. B. P. Lamba is of the opinion that, "Scobie is obsessed with the weight of his sin that he cannot avoid, as he cannot avoid the occasion of the sin . . . The sin of adultery and deceit, coupled with the sin of tacit murder of his servant, goads the protagonist to the mortal sin of despair and of suicide" (60). Scobie is also convinced that God is no longer an abstract or an ideal for contemplation, but who seemed to him a 'thou' to be faced. His affliction goes so deep that he has no other choice except self-slaughter to resolve the crisis. Like Judas, Scobie betrays God by the desperate offering of his damnation. Rogger Sharrock, observes thus:

> His betrayal of God coincides with the final stage of his corruption as a policeman. Before delivering the diamonds he has come needlessly to distrust his loyal servant Ali: Yusef promises in ambiguous terms to draw Ali away and in fact has him murdered . . . When he finds the body under some petrol drums . . . he believes he is totally responsible on account of his lack of trust . . . and that this betrayal is intimately connected with his betrayal of God. (134)

Scobie, then realizes that his involvement with Yusef is worse than his sin of adultery. The breakdown of the policeman can be seen in his own awareness of his sinfulness: “He wiped the sweat off his forehead and he thought for a moment: This is just a sickness, a fever . . . The record of the last six months - the first night in the Nissen hut, the letter which said too much, the smuggled diamonds, the lies, the Sacrament taken to put a woman’s mind at ease” (HM. 245).

As Scobie goes out to find the corpse of Ali, he looks for the broken rosary and comes to see Ali at the end of it. On seeing Ali’s body, Scobie cries aloud: “He swore aloud, hysterically. ‘By God, I’ll get the man who did this’, He thought: I am the man. Didn’t I know all the time in Yusef’s room that something was planned? . . . like a broken piece of the rosary he looked for: a couple of black beads and the image of God coiled at the end of it” (HM. 247).

This tragic incident moves him to imagine his betrayal of God through Ali. Scobie’s inability to examine his own behaviour and his unwillingness to accept Wilson’s real identity, are part of his sense of irresponsibility that ultimately leads to the murder of his servant, Ali:

> It seemed to Scobie that now or never he must ask what was Yusef’s plan, but the weariness of his corruption halted his tongue . . . ‘You must not worry, Major Scobie. I think your boy can be made quite trustworthy.’ He said with relief and hope, ‘You mean you have a hold on him?’ ‘Don’t ask questions. You will see. (HM. 244)

The irony of Yusef’s confident claim that Scobie will finally ‘see’ resounds firmly with the reader, for the murder opens Scobie’s eyes to his self-imposed blindness.

can

imagine the inner struggle of Scobie which damns him day by day. He realizes his failure and tries to compare the death of Ali with the death of Jesus. He feels that he is tormenting Christ by his sins and shows his intense love of God through this image of Christ: “Oh God’, he thought, I’ve killed you: You’ve served me all these years and I’ve killed you at the end of them. God lay there under the petrol drums and Scobie felt the tears in his mouth, salt in the cracks of his lips. You served me and I did this to you. You were faithful to me, and I wouldn’t trust you” (HM. 247). Scobie then probes into his inner cell of his heart where he sees nothing but darkness. He experiences his inner conflict between good and evil and reflects over his battlefield: “Scobie thought: if only I could feel pain; have I really become so evil?” (HM. 291). Kurismmoottil here asserts. “He has chosen the accused role of the Roman soldier which he must reply endlessly on holidays and feastdays - striking his God, piercing Him with nails and sword and spear. It would have been better were he never born” (121).

Scobie’s inner struggle is between his belief and disbelief in a God, who does not seem to be human enough to let him express his love and sympathy to other human beings. This idea is stressed by J. P. Kulshrestha: “Scobie’s predicament may be defined thus: he is tormented by his love of God because he cannot reconcile it with his love of human beings. The only way out for him is to kill himself but, as a Catholic he cannot do it without wounding God . . . Scobie believes in God and yet he can believe in no God who was not human enough to love what he had created” (104-

105). Thus we find the inner tension of Scobie to reconcile with his own compassionate self against the Supreme God, who allows mental pain in human life. As observed by Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, “the problem of reconciling the existence of suffering with an Omnipotent and merciful providence is now raised explicitly” (217).

God has given man free will and hence, it is man’s responsibility to make the right choice. He can spurn the call of God’s love and disregard the warning of His voice. But the nature of God’s love and truth is eternal and steadfast. In the Bible we find several characters obsessed with evil; but after their infidelity to God and man they use their free will to make the choice, which may lead them either to salvation or to eternal damnation. And some others are led to purgatory after death. Peter and Judas, the two disciples of Jesus are observed as two contradictory characters in the New Testament. Both of them betray Jesus one way or the other; but Peter develops a sense of sin and regrets over his evil action with a real contrite heart: “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly” (Luke. 22.62). On the contrary, Judas is found with a sense of guilt and never makes reconciliation before death, which leads him to eternal damnation. It is the intervention of Satan that makes Judas so cruel to betray Jesus, his Master. In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 3* it is found that “the devil left Jesus for a season (Luke. 4.13) now to return, and through one of the Twelve, Satan will now bring the conflict between God and Satan to a decisive stage” (III. 1093). In the *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, it is suggested that Judas “betrayed Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah, but his absence at the trial, when such witnesses were sought, refutes this . . . Upon reflecting over what he had done, Judas experienced remorse and sought to

undo his evil deed; but it was not possible. In sorrow he hanged himself" (514).

Greene believes that man has no right to judge one another or predict what is going on in a human heart. In utter depression and frustration, Judas threw away the thirty pieces of silver coins, the cost of the precious blood of Jesus.

> Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood . . . he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself . . . it is the price of blood. (Matt. 27. 3-6).

Before betraying the Master, Judas went to the chief priests and made a bargain for the silver coins: "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. 26.15). One may assume Judas' betrayal as R. W. B. Lewis comments in *The Picaresque Saint*, "it is the supposedly decent and sensible fellow who acts out the treacherous role of Judas, and the dishonest or the dangerous man who is betrayed" (266). In Shakespeare's *Othello*, one may observe how Othello makes a choice of evil in the famous temptation scene, kneeling before Iago, as a solemn expression of his total submission to the devil and denial of goodness in the person of Desdemona. His choice of evil is complete when he rejects Desdemona as a devil and accepts Iago as his lieutenant. At the end of the play, when Othello realizes that he has murdered an innocent and faithful wife, he kills himself in atonement for his sin. He takes up the full responsibility of his sin and

expresses his regret over the evil choice. In *The Heart of the Matter,* Scobie also makes an evil choice, killing himself with guilt feeling and taking up the full responsibility of sin.

In the Bible, we find a wise man selling everything he had in order to possess the precious pearl; whereas, Judas loses the precious pearl of Jesus, in order to possess merely thirty pieces of silver, which leads him to eternal pain and damnation. It seems Shakespeare has referred to the action of Judas when he says in *Othello*: "Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand like the base Indian, threw a pearl away" (Oth. V II 400). None of the fallen characters of Shakespeare avoids his responsibility for crimes, but instead, they admit it at least before they die.

Scobie here, throws away all that he had including his own life in order to possess damnation. Scobie feels that he is deserted by his wife, mistress and even by God. He feels that others suffer or die only because he exists, and when Helen asks about Ali's death he says, "I didn't cut his throat myself, . . . But he died because I existed" (HM. 249). In this situation, Scobie prays to God to kill him. Paul O' Prey adds: "God enters the story almost as a character and becomes in turn a victim of Scobie's pity, for Scobie's final decision to kill himself is as much due to wishing to spare God" (84).

Readers may think that Scobie must decide between the conflicting claims of Louise and Helen but, he cannot take a decision without causing pain to one of them. B. P. Lamba is of strong conviction that Scobie loves God and man as the whisky priest does: "Scobie has a desire to do good and has innate love for God. He is willing to be damned himself for the good of others" (28). Scobie decides to atone for his sins

by

various means. As Grahame Smith suggests in *The Achievement of Graham Greene*, "Scobie betrays God in killing himself; Greene's inner world is filled with painful conflicts, suffering and betrayal" (13).

Greene's characterization is done in such a way to give the clear impression on the reader that Scobie, caught between the two women as well as God and unable to bear the sufferings of others, decides to commit suicide. In the words of Kurismmoottil, "Scobie's proneness to disaster is portrayed sensitively and in a convincing manner" (112). Gangeshwar Rai reads the mind of Scobie thus: "The way he carefully plans his suicide and makes it appear a natural death so that his wife and mistress may not suffer, also confirms his love for man. He argues that by killing himself he will stop inflicting pain on those he loves - Louise, Helen and God" (51). Scobie utters the feelings of guilt through his painful words: "I can't desert either of them while I'm alive, but I can die and remove myself from their blood stream. They are ill with me and I can cure them. And you too God - you are ill with me . . . You'll be better off if you lose me once and for all" (HM. 258).

Laurence Lerner clearly remarks in one of his articles about Scobie's inner struggle at the end of his life. According to him, Scobie hurts those he loves and he hurts God once and for all: "Scobie mistrusts God because he cannot shrug off his part in Helen's happiness: the selfish action and the right action would, in his case, be the same, and he has to do the wrong compassionate action, even if it means giving up salvation" (222). Like Pinkie and the whisky priest, Scobie reflects the sinfulness of man and his thirst for the mercy of God. Scobie's life is filled with misery and

suffering. As Lamba remarks: “Tormented by his love for God, he cannot reconcile it with his love for human beings. He loves God and yet cannot help feel outraged at the God who permits so much misery and pain in this world. His predicament attracts the ‘appalling strangeness of the mercy of God” (30).

David Pryce-Jones goes to the extent of comparing Scobie’s self-sacrifice with the suffering of Christ and says: “Scobie too will be crucified for the sins of others . . . demanding death as the price of release. He feels himself betrayed at all points” (81). As Lamba has pointed out, “Wilson is his Judas” (30). The author tries to show the reality that suicide was Scobie’s inevitable end. Critics have various opinions about Scobie’s act of suicide. O’Brien states: “Scobie offers his own damnation’ in order to save others, including God, from suffering” (78). Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, in the *Graham Greene’s Childless Fathers* says: “Scobie is – like his God – offering love to anyone who may need it, to the whole world. Scobie’s conception of his God changes through his own ordeal of love and self-sacrifice. Christ becomes a real suffering being for Scobie, as real as. . . .” (53).

Scobie plans his suicide, to avoid hurting God and in such a way that neither Louise nor Helen will know about his death. Lamba observes: “Scobie has lost all hope, since he cannot escape from the sin” (46). Scobie’s inner conflict between good and evil can be seen here. Yusef is presented as the evil aspect of Scobie and Wilson is pictured as Judas in his betrayal. Mesnet affirms: “What he offers us is a tragic vision of man’s predicament. The fatality of evil, the power of grace – both forces are at war within him: he is torn between the opposed forces of his natural desires and the exigencies of his inner self – the man within” (109).

Greene's art of depicting Scobie's personal anguish and bewilderment against the fatal human predicament can be seen here. Addressing God, Scobie utters:

> O God, . . . I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife because I can't observe your suffering. I can only imagine it . . . I can't desert either of them while I'm alive, but I can die . . . I can't go on, month after month, insulting You. I can't face coming up to the altar at Christmas – Your birthday feast – and taking Your body and blood for the sake of a lie . . . You'll be better off if You lose me once and for all. (HM. 258)

Scobie feels that he is left alone with his sin. At the same time, he is happy to have a voice and that voice is the voice of God, who pleads with his loneliness.

And the voice of God tries to bring him out of darkness to the light. As he is obsessed with the weight of his own sinfulness, he cannot hope that he can be saved. He is certain that he has nothing to hope for and he says: "I love failure: I can't love success . . . He thought, even God is a failure" (HM. 254). The voice of God, here represents the power of good against the evil thoughts within Scobie. Here lies the real conflict between good and evil in a human heart. Patrick O'Neil, the editor to the *Great World Writer: Twentieth Century* explains the concept of good and evil in the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, thus:

> Greene's primary thematic concerns, the destruction of innocence and the struggle against one's dark nature, fall under his overarching interest in the eternal struggle between good and evil in this world. For Greene, good and

> evil exist on a separate plane from mere right and wrong; . . . Major Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* lies and commits adultery, . . . Scobie is a man consumed by goodness and the desire to do good. Greene recognizes that this kind of paradox exists, and he seems to believe that the struggle between good and evil operates on a higher moral plane than is found in the world of mere right and wrong. (502)

And the voice within him, asks Scobie to face any of the alternatives: ". . . to go upto the Nissen hut and say good-bye, or . . . go to your house and say good-bye to your wife and live with your mistress . . . One of them will suffer, but can't you trust me to see that the suffering isn't too great?" (HM. 259).

The readers may be right in their suggestion that Scobie should have made the fundamental option according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is contextual to add Josef Fuchs' words in order to examine the choice made by Scobie: "In reality, it is precisely the fundamental option which in the last resort determines a person's moral disposition" (*Christian Morality*, 30). But being a weak and sympathetic character, Scobie says, "I can't make one of them suffer so as to save myself" (HM. 259). Even at the last moment of his life, as he falls unconscious he says aloud, "Dear God, I love" (HM. 264).

The readers can find the end of the novel with a conversation between Mrs. Scobie and Father Rank. Kulshrestha's words are very relevant here:

> Two contrasted views or judgements of Scobie's ultimate destiny or destination are presented: one based on the moral legalism of 'religiose' human standards and the other on divine mercy. Through Father Rank,

> Greene insists once again upon the 'appalling strangeness' of the mercy of God. Louise believes that her husband is damned; but Father Rank holds out hope for Scobie. (109)

Here comes Father Rank, to conclude the entire life of Scobie and says: "It may seem an odd thing to say – when a man's as wrong as he was – but I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God" (HM. 272). His wife Louise also agrees with this view saying, "He certainly loved no one else" (HM. 272). Scobie kills himself out of pity for God and at the end of this novel one finds the author's concern for the human heart against the judgement of the Church or other human beings. God's grace works in mysterious ways. Father Rank, in the last part of the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, tells Loiuse: "For goodness' sake, Mrs. Scobie, don't imagine you – or I – know a thing about God's mercy

. . . The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart" (HM. 272). Therefore, one cannot imagine that Scobie's suicide damns him to hell. It is believed that in the last minute, God might have granted the inner peace and joy to this unpleasant man, who has suffered deeply. P. S. Sundaram's question in the Indian Express consolidates this view: "Does the Church or anyone else know about God's ways?" (*Indian Express*, 13 April, 1991).

In spite of all his spiritual conflicts and sorrows and misfortunes, Scobie brings himself with a great effort to say aloud, "Dear God, I love . . ." (HM. 313). As Sharrock adds, "From the depths of his consciousness, and most characteristically, from the depth of his isolation, he responds to the cry of suffering as he had done with

the human beings" (73). Gangeshwar Rai in this connection, suggests that like the whisky priest, "Scobie is angst-ridden and strives hard to be his real self. His anxiety springs from the conflict of loyalties which torments his mind as well as from an awareness of the absurd in life"(48). Scobie seems transparent about the nature of life in the world and knows well from experience that "no human being can really understand another, and no one can arrange another's happiness" (HM. 81).

Therefore, one can be certain that Scobie gives too much of himself to others, as his every act is motivated by love or pity. Grahame Smith also emphasizes this idea: "Whatever moral errors and spiritual sins Scobie has committed stemmed from love, a love on which Greene has expended all his skill so as to make us feel it at the level of experience not statement" (102). Greene suggests that Scobie's inability to examine his own behaviour, and his initial refusal to acknowledge Wilson's identity, are the products of his own self-deception that ultimately leads to the murder of his servant, Ali without his knowledge: "It seemed to Scobie that now or never he must ask what was Yusef's plan, but the weariness of his corruption halted his tongue . . . 'You must not worry, Major Scobie. I think your boy can be made quite trustworthy.' "He said with relief and hope, 'You mean you have a hold on him?' 'Don't ask questions. You will see" (HM. 244). Scobie is quite ignorant of the evil plan of Yusef, for the murder opens Scobie's eyes to his self-imposed blindness: "Oh God, he thought, I've killed you: you've served me all these years and I've killed you at the end of them" (HM. 247).

As Scobie examines the case of Ali, he feels regret over the evil act and tells that, the most trustworthy person is one who can never again speak. Ironically, this is

Scobie's self-perception as well; once dead, he feels he will no longer afflict God: "I can't go on, month after month, insulting you . . . You'll be better off if you lose me once and for all . . . It will be no use then sweeping the floor to find me or searching for me over the mountains. You'll be able to forget me God, for eternity" (HM. 258). Thus Scobie feels cheated by Yusef with the death of Ali, and so he undergoes great mental agony and spiritual conflict inside. Scobie's attitude to God, fluctuates from a plea to remain connected after he commits himself to maintaining the tie with Helen: "Oh God, I have deserted you. Do not You desert me" (HM. 181). But if he is frustrated by what he experiences as God's accessibility, Scobie still cannot see Him, as he admits: "I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife because I can't observe your suffering. I can only imagine it" (HM. 258).

The omni-presence of God approaches him perennially like a silent observer which has emerged from the darkness: "the other voice . . . spoke from the cave of his body; it was as if the sacrament which had lodged there for his damnation gave tongue" (HM. 258). To Scobie, God has become his constant pursuer, continuously asserting his unseen but formidable power. Here, the most persistent manifestation of this abstract presence is what Scobie feels as the sudden movement of an external force which longs to reach him before he dies: "It seemed to him as though someone outside the room were seeking him, and he made a last effort to indicate that he was here" (HM. 265). Evelyn Waugh describes in the *Commonweal* about Scobie's willingness to die as an unjust demand of God: "To me the idea of willing my own damnation for the love of God is either a very loose poetical expression or a mad

blasphemy, for the God who accepted that sacrifice could be neither just nor lovable" (324). Though Scobie insists that his suicide results from his dislike to insulting God with his lack of contrition, the burning desire to be out of sight from God is also clearly revealed in his words. Gangeshwar Rai expresses his belief and justification regarding the death of Scobie thus: "There is something Christ-like in Scobie's self-sacrifice. Christ had not been murdered: you could not murder God: Christ had killed himself. Scobie's conduct appears to fulfill the Pauline doctrine of the extreme form of human love, a willingness to save others through one's own damnation" (51). According to the Pauline doctrine of Christ's love, God who is merciful, loved man even in the sinful state and saved us by the Divine grace. In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul says: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5.8).

In *The Heart of the Matter,* Scobie seeks to treat his 'mortal sin' of committing suicide, as an act of kindness and self-sacrifice, and tries to base it on a Biblical teaching**.** Thus says St. John: "If man says I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." (1John. 4.20). By his death, Scobie justifies that he will be liberating his lover, his wife, and God from his own sinful presence: "You'll be better off if you lose me once and for all" (HM. 258). He continues with the monologue but later it has become a discussion with the other voice: "He stood with the gin bottle poised and thought: then Hell will begin; they'll be safe from me, Helen, Louise and You" (HM.262).

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Catholic, Scobie has to accept the punishment for his mortal sin of suicide. The teachings of the Catholic Church are categorical regarding the double consequences of sin: “Grave sin deprives us of communion with God, and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the “eternal punishment” of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory” (*Catechism*, 284). The forgiveness of sin and restoration of the lost spiritual union with God necessitate and demand the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but the sinner must bear all the sufferings and trials and undergo the process of sanctification in order to attain the divine mercy. The convincingly spelt out words of K. S. Subramaniam about infinite mercy and love of God may be borne in mind:

> In *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene attempts to reconcile the presence of evil and suffering in this world with the existence of an omnipotent and merciful providence in heaven. Scobie wonders how so much of suffering and evil could co-exist with the infinite mercy and love of God. He has, also, carried to its conclusion the implications of his own faith – the love and mercy and mystery of God. (24)

In his observation on Greene, A. A. De Vitis argues that Greene “personally has little belief in the doctrine of eternal punishment, the point that continues to perturb readers of the work. He points out that it is Scobie who believes in hell, that suicide is Scobie’s solution to save God from himself” (85). Similarly, Samson in the Holy

Bible dies in order to liberate Israel from the evil hands of the Philistines.

Samson was so fearsome to the Philistines that during his lifetime they avoided all invasions into the territory of Israel. Samson begins the deliverance of God's people from the hands of the Philistines as he accepts martyrdom. In the last moments of his life he makes a most heartbreaking prayer before God's merciful presence, willing to sacrifice his own life for a better cause of Israel's deliverance: "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judg. 16.26–30). Samson was himself willing to die with the Philistines. When he bowed himself with all his might, the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. Thus, the dead which Samson killed at his death were more than he destroyed in his life. This event was nothing but a national catastrophe for the Philistines. A large number of the leaders and wise men were killed in the destruction, and the political infrastructure of the nation was destroyed at this time. This tragedy hindered the Philistines from organizing and oppressing Israel for many more years after. The Philistines did not even attempt to prevent Samson's relatives from taking his body back home for burial. Samson was so awfully fearsome to the Philistines that during his lifetime they were compelled to avoid all invasions into the territory of Israel. Thus Samson became a powerful instrument of God, by being a redeemer to the Israel.

The readers cannot miss to observe the similarity of Samson's death as martyrdom and sacrifice as in the case of Scobie. Scobie's death appears to be merely a suicidal attempt but the intention behind it is the deliverance of others. Thus says A. A. De Vitis regarding the mental agony of the protagonist of the novel, "Scobie's

struggle with himself and with the God of the Catholic Church forms the basis of the conflict: Scobie's pity for suffering humanity forces him to suicide, the sin of despair. And according to the Church, this is damnation" (87). Regarding Scobie's love and pity Mesnet writes, "Pity is not a substitute for love; when separated from it, it is ultimately destructive, a negative sharing of a failure, whereas love is creative" (64). Scobie, out of love and pity, sacrifices his own happiness and pleasures of worldly life and is willing to end his life for the happiness of others, by accepting a kind of martyrdom, because the Catholic Church does not allow him to continue his sinful life. Scobie, in his deep agony expresses his inner self: "Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim . . . Only the man of goodwill carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation" (HM. 60). Scobie wants happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself. He even prayed to God to give him death before making others unhappy. De Vitis is of the opinion that "Scobie may have killed himself, but he may have repented in the moment before death" (92).

Before his birth, God set Samson apart for service to Him. During his lifetime he was dedicated to the purpose to which God had set him aside for delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines. While he died an untimely death, his greatest success set the Philistines back again for a number of years. Not until Samuel was fully established as a prophet and judge could the Philistines invade Israel again. But at this time God intervened and the Philistines were defeated and driven back; because the last prayer offered by Samson was like a helpless cry of a child before God with a worn-out heart. And the prayer was answered and thus, Samson set the stage for both

Saul and David to bring about permanent deliverance from the Philistines. Both Scobie and Samson die for the deliverance of others. Regarding Scobie's suicide, Mesnet writes:

> Others suffer or die just because he exists; and his suicide - his last lie - so cunningly concealed from Louise and Helen, is also his last act of pity for those he loves - Louise and Helen and God too - and to whom he can only bring pain. His final decision is made in the belief that the only way to spare God from further pain is to destroy himself altogether. (67)

Scobie has lost the sense of trust in God and appears to be unaware of the possibility of the divine mercy. Scobie also believes that his sin is too great for God to forgive. He is unable to keep his trust in the mercy of God and is painfully guilty of his sins. It is his guilt feeling that leads him to depression and ultimately to suicide at the climax of his mental conflict.

Scobie's mental agony depicted by Greene can be assumed as his experience of hell on earth, where he is purified and even converted at the last moment of his life: "O God convince me, help me, convince me. Make me feel that I am more important than that girl. . . Make me put my own soul first. Give me trust in your mercy to the one I abandon" (HM. 220). He is ready to take up any kind of punishments for the sake of others' happiness, "O God, he said, if instead I should abandon you, punish me but let the others get some happiness" (HM. 220). Scobie again pleads with God to kill him in his intense mental agony, "O God, he prayed . . . What a mess I am. I carry suffering with me like a body smell. Kill me. Put an end to me" (HM. 252). Greene

shows his profound love for man in this novel. Kenneth Lohf remarks, “The priest and Scobie arrive at saint’s appreciation of humility” (*The Catholic World*, 199). He also expresses his apprehension, “how evil can be changed into that essential and immutable goodness that is at the base of all substance” (199). Scobie represents humanity, where some are conquered by evil powers and get themselves ruined. Greene speaks with authority: “The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn’t know what goes on in a single human heart” (HM. 272).

Scobie is ready to suffer and even damn himself in order to save others from their sufferings: “I can’t make one of them suffer so as to save myself. I’m responsible and I’ll see it through the only way I can” (HM. 259). Samson’s deliberate self-killing has a meaningful dimension, where he is vengeful to the Philistines, but at the same time his personal weaknesses are forgiven and attained sanctification. Throughout this chapter, one may find a number of parallel situations in the lives of both Scobie and Samson. But at the same time, there are too many contrasting circumstances found while analyzing. Scobie is an ordinary layman in the Catholic Church and is not entrusted with any particular duty by God; whereas, Samson is specially called by God even before his birth, to be born as a Nazarite to fight for Israel against the Philistines. Scobie breaks his marital vow and commits adultery out of love and pity; similarly, Samson violates the divine rules and accepts a Philistine woman as his wife, which is a terrible offense against God. Both Scobie and Samson deliberately end their life on different intentions. Scobie ends his life for the peace and happiness of others and not to hurt and offend God anymore with his sinful life. On the contrary, Samson

ends his life to wipe out the race of Philistines and to save Israel from their rivals, so to fulfill his divine duty. The similarities and dissimilarities with the lives and deaths of Scobie and Samson as discussed in this chapter positively lead us to distinguish the kind of mental agony experienced by both of them as part of their purgatory and sanctification, in order to attain Divine mercy.

Chapter III

Spiritual Conflict in *The Power and the Glory.*

> It is a long struggle and a long suffering, evolution, and I believe God is suffering the same evolution that we are, but perhaps with more pain.
>
> - Greene, *The Honorary Consul*, 224.

The theme of Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory*, is the conflict between the Church and the state. It is a representation of the spiritual transformation of a sinner into a saint through martyrdom. The novel throws light on different situations, where the protagonist, the whisky priest is subjected to temptation and the way he endures physical, mental and spiritual pain to attain unearthly power and glory at the end. In spite of his personal weaknesses, and the constant struggle with the lieutenant of the law representing the State, the whisky priest embraces his ultimate victory in martyrdom. It is a parallel study of the protagonist, the whisky-priest with King David in the Holy Bible, comparing their inner struggles and spiritual conflicts. Through *The Power and the Glory*, Greene describes the sufferings - mental anguish and spiritual conflict - of the whisky priest as a basic means to sanctification. Thus, the purpose and purview of this chapter is to analyze the spiritual conflict of the whisky priest during the time of religious persecution, in comparison with the Biblical model, King David in the Holy Bible.

The whisky priest, in *The Power and the Glory*, represents the Church during the religious persecution in Mexico. He suffers from loneliness and inner conflict as

part of fulfilling his responsibility towards the Church as well as keeping fidelity to God. David Pryce-Jones in his study on *The Power and the Glory*, observes the background of Mexico thus: “The war is declared, the war between the God of faith and the Devil of the twentieth century, and if the Mexicans must stay hopelessly poor in order to keep their faith, then there is very little help for it” (46). In the novel one finds the appearance of another young priest in the scene immediately after the martyrdom of the whisky priest, to carry on the service regarding Catholic faith. In the Holy Bible also, we find that at the end of David’s reign, his dream of building the Jerusalem Temple is fulfilled through his son, Solomon. Throughout their life, both the whisky priest and King David are confronted with internal and external battlefields between the equal forces of good and evil. This chapter proposes to explore the spiritual conflicts of the whisky priest and King David by making a comparative analysis. King David, the Biblical model is selected for the comparative study with the whisky priest, the protagonist of *The Power and the Glory*, because there are a great number of similarities related to their divine call, their mission, their weaknesses and offences, their repentance and convictions, atonement and general confessions, and the glorious end of their lives with the progression of their mission through the new generation. Thus, the present study focuses the character analysis of these two on the realm of suffering and sanctification.

Graham Greene’s visit to Mexico at the time of the religious persecution, led to the creation of his most powerful novel, *The Power and the Glory* (1940) which in fact, brought Greene to the attention of the world, as a leading Catholic writer. Greene had gone to Mexico in 1938, to investigate the condition of the Church after the

religious persecution initiated by the Government. Marie-Beatrice Mesnet's portrayal of Mexico is "an image of the Dark Ages which seem to have come again and in which we are brought back to a true religion, purified from any complacent compromise with the world - the world which appears at last as it is: a prison" (21). Greene's method of symbolization is observed by Mesnet thus: "Mexico, like Africa, becomes another image; it is a state of mind, violence and faith and life 'under the shadow of religion - of God or the Devil' - against anarchy" (20). In Mexico, Greene is reminded of the violence in the world, primarily connected with religion. The author's spiritual inconsistency is reflected in this particular novel. Greene has portrayed the situation of Mexico in a dark background, where religion has been considered to be dangerous, where cruelty, corruption and evil have full sway. Regarding this, De Vitis states that "*The Power and the Glory* portrays Greene's first-hand experience of Mexican politics and religion" (75).

As Greene symbolizes Mexico as a state of mind, certain aspects like crime, lust and unhappiness fill the land of this novel, *The Power and the Glory.* Since it is a world of sin and suffering, the problem of evil is portrayed very sharply in the novel. Thus, the theme of the novel is the conflict between the Church and the State, where the power of God versus the power of a Godless State, is represented by the conflict between the whisky-priest and the lieutenant. S. K. Sharma in his work, *Graham Greene: The Search for Belief,* asserts: "The dramatic contrast between belief and non-belief was evident in the Catholic novels also. The novels of Graham Greene have a fair sprinkling of believers and non-believers. The whisky-priest, for example, had a

formidable rival in the lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory*" (153). The novel, *The Power and the Glory* indirectly guides the reader through the path of spiritual transformation of a sinner into martyrdom and sainthood.

The title of the novel, *The Power and the Glory* is assumed to have been taken from the last part of the Lord's Prayer, invoking God as 'Our Father in Heaven': "For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. 6.13). The title has a parallel reference to T.S. Eliot's poem, "The Hollow Men". The hollow men wander in a barren landscape, trying to remember the line after "For Thine is the Kingdom" in the Lord's prayer. The phrase happens to be the 'power and the glory'. Significantly, the word 'power' has been used for a variety of words and phrases, which mean the ability to do something supreme. God has given power to man with freedom and authority and the consequence of man's free-will is described in *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology in India*: "Sometimes God gives power to those who possess the ability to perform acts contrary to the will and commandments of God. This includes Satan and various individuals and nations" (747). The power and the authority given to man by God is reflected here as the spiritual power and authority of the Church committed to the protagonist, the whisky priest. The term 'glory' refers primarily to God's nature and is evidenced in God's creation. Glory is the manifestation of God and the Psalmist in the Old Testament says, "Glory ye in his holy name" (Psalms. 105:3). In *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology in India,* it is said, "Giving God glory adds nothing to God, but rather acknowledges God's magnificence and power, thus praising and thanking God" (378). The book of Revelation has a similar view: "Thou art worthy, O

Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things . . .” (Rev. 4.11). By giving glory to God, God’s unique claim to worship is acknowledged and man’s duty to admit his guilt before God is indirectly declared.

As far as the structure of the novel is concerned, the first section deals with those characters that the whisky priest has come into contact with. They are Dr. Tench, Coral Fellows, Luis, the chief of police, and the lieutenant. The second section deals with the priest’s flight from the civil authorities, and it introduces the mestizo, the Judas-like figure. The third section pictures the priest in danger of falling back into the free ways of his early ministry and his decision to accept martyrdom. Through the priest Greene establishes his major concern in the novel that the grace of God upon the soul of a man, is the symbol of his strength. Thus says St. Paul, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12.9). A similar idea is found in David’s psalms as he proclaims his trust and hope in God: “In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears . . . He bowed the heavens also, and came down . . .” (Ps. 18.6-9). Greene’s novels especially, *The Power and the Glory*, shows repeatedly how even from evil actions good ultimately comes. Life in the world is impure, that is to say, it includes contraries. The idea is Biblical that all men are corrupt and there is none that is good: “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps. 14. 2-3).

As Greene's most renowned work, *The Power and the Glory* is representative of his treatment of character and theme. Here, the thematic concerns are worked out more through characterization than through plot. The theme of the novel is reflected through the spiritual journey of the whisky priest and the significance of the Roman Catholic Church in the portrayal of a saint's life. According to Paul O' Prey, the theme of the novel is based on the capacity for good and evil in individual human beings. In his book, *A Reader's Guide to Graham Greene*, he establishes:

> One of the main points of Greene's thesis in the novel is that in a priest the man is separate from his office, so that despite being corrupt - perhaps even damned - he can still put God into the mouths of men . . . On the contrary, the purely secular ideals of the party are founded entirely on man's capacity for good, and can thus be irreparably damaged by the weakness or corruption of individuals. (76)

In the novel, readers find the real conflict between good and evil in the inner core of the protagonist. As Lamba assumes: "The real battle between the forces of evil and good takes place in the soul of the priest; in his death the evil is defeated, and the forces of good transform the whisky-priest into an uncanonised saint, converting even the boy Luis" (45). One may clearly find his attempts to classify the connection between the novel and its implications for a Catholic writer who travels to Mexico in order to investigate the persecution of Catholic priests by the Mexican government. Greene himself has written in his, *Ways of Escape*, thus: "I think *The Power and the Glory* is the only novel I have written to a thesis" (WE. 67). Through this novel, Greene tries to convey religious themes and issues.

Greene has shown how the evil can ultimately transform a human mind into sainthood. The epigraph to Greene's *The Honorary Consul* (1973), taken from Thomas Hardy, reads: "All things merge in one another - good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics . . . ." Greene could have very well given this epigraph to *The Power and the Glory*. The long struggle between the whisky priest and the lieutenant in the novel is the symbolic representation of the conflict of good and evil which can be applied to the struggle between religion and politics. The priests in Greene's novels assume leading roles in politics and actively participate in helping the poor and the oppressed in their life-struggle for political liberation. Greene heroes, seek God as well as goodness in everything that they come across in their life on earth. Though they are weak in flesh, they are fully aware of the nothingness of their selves and are ready to accept martyrdom. As Maria Couto comments: "Greene's vision of fallen man is not pessimistic - faith is made to transcend despair in a complex and ambiguous way and his novels offer something better than symbol or allegory" (66).

Greene tries to show man's struggle in the world through his novels. According to Keshava Prasad, "There is no cessation of the struggle. But the struggle is human. The eternal conflict between good and evil is enacted in a contemporary setting . . . It requires a human being to realize the predicament of man undergoing the trials of life. And Greene shows that he has it" (29). The anonymous priest in the novel, *The Power and the Glory*, tries to fulfill the needs of the church, the poor and the oppressed. The strength of the novel lies in the complexity of the priest's life. Greene depicts the

priest's weaknesses to look like human. Greene humanizes the weakness of the priest. His weakness becomes his strength. The Church may or may not ignore his weaknesses, but the reader feels sympathy towards him. The priest's inner struggle draws our sympathy, as he moves from one experience to the other. The priest is anointed by God and led by the spirit of God; so also King David, the Biblical model selected for the analytical study, is chosen and anointed for the salvation of Israel.

King David is one of the most beloved characters in the Bible. He is revered as the greatest of all Israelite kings. The Messianic covenant is established through his ancestry. David, the second king of Israel, who reigned during the period of 1010 - 970 BC., was certainly a man who trusted God and practiced righteousness. He was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse, from Bethlehem. A detailed presentation of David's life, Divine call and his relationship with Yahweh, is found in the books of *Samuel* and *Chronicles*. Graeme Auld expresses his view in finding the sources on David and remarks the differences between *Samuel* and *Chronicles*:

> Since most of the narrative which we find in Samuel but not repeated in Chronicles is normally attributed to separate sources on David, the question is essentially this: Were all the David sources first gathered together in Samuel, then some of them weeded out by the Chronicler? Or does the Chronicler . . . still retain the shape of a shorter collection which was extensively added to in Samuel also. (36)

The prophet, Samuel was sent to Jesse, in Bethlehem, in order to anoint one of his eight sons as king. Samuel was impressed as he looked at the older sons, but God told him none of these were to be chosen. " . . . The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on

his

countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1Sam. 16.7). Samuel asked Jesse to bring all his sons:

> Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: . . . 'And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. (1 Sam. 16.10-14)

As the spirit of the Lord entered upon David, his life progressed as a musician for Saul, destroyer of the Philistine giant Goliath, a soldier in Israel's army, and eventually a powerful and great King. David, the most powerful King of Israel, is thus anointed as God's chosen leader.

During a period of illness, when the evil spirit troubled Saul, David was brought to court to soothe the king by playing on the harp, but his stay at the court was brief. He earned the gratitude of Saul and was made an armor bearer, but later proved himself to be very skillful on the battlefield. In the court, David exhibited his wisdom and discretion. Not long afterwards, whilst his three elder brothers were in the field, fighting under Saul against the Philistines, David was sent to the camp with some food and other materials. There he heard the shouting words of the giant, Goliath of Geth, challenging all Israel to single contest, and David volunteered with God's help to kill

the Philistine. Goliath is dead with his own sword and the humble boy, David wins the battle and proves that the victory lies where there is real trust in God. His victory over Goliath brought about the defeat of the enemy. The battle between David and Goliath is a battle between good and evil, and amazingly**,** Saul then becomes jealous of David's popularity.

When David returns from the slaughter of the Philistines, the women come out singing and dancing, to meet King Saul with joy, playing their musical instruments:

> And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, they have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. (1 Sam. 18.6-9)

David's victory over Goliath won for him the tender friendship of Jonathan, the son of Saul. The childlike innocence proved their relationship. Prince Jonathan gave his own overcoat and arms to David generously. Like Moses in the Old Testament, David also was in exile for sometime. Those who are entrusted with some official responsibility by God will be forced to keep themselves away from the ordinary life. David had to undergo such a painful situation that he was endangered by the very threat of Saul for a long period of time. In the novel, *The Power and the Glory*, the priest is terribly aware of loss of human relationship. He felt like a man without passport to escape and his adventurous pilgrimage seems to be a tragic one during the conflict between the Church and the State. He celebrates Mass for the Catholic villagers. They sympathize

with him

and love

him. The priest is stricken with fear: “Evil ran like malaria in his veins” (PG.176). In his lonely life situations, the love and sympathy of the villagers consoled the whisky priest to a great extent. Similarly, one realizes the solace and comfort rendered by Prince Jonathan’s innocent love and sympathy towards David, during his exile from the jealous King Saul.

As a King chosen by God, David conquered Jerusalem and made it the capital city of Israel. The Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem and placed in the new tent constructed by the king. Later on, when he proposed to build a temple, Prophet Nathan informed him, that God had reserved this task for his successor. David’s life is depicted in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the book of 1 Kings in the Bible. David was threatened by Saul several times for, in a number of battles with the Philistines David proved himself a great success. Samuel sees a serious character-blemish in Saul and knows such a man cannot be trusted always to obey God. Soon, Saul’s lack of judgment begins to appear. God had already determined to replace him with David. The encounter of Saul and David was a battle between good and evil. Over a period of time, Saul’s jealously grows worse. He becomes suspicious, distrustful, and envious. He gives himself over to demonic influence. Saul had now become extremely dangerous. He conspires to kill David by fighting against the Philistines as he had lost the sense of right and wrong:

> And it came to pass . . . that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as

> at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul. (1 Sam. 18.10-12)

Saul is now obsessed by a spirit of jealousy, and openly supports murder: "And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David" (1 Sam. 19.1). Seldom, Saul felt regret and had a change of heart, but it never lasted long. His jealousy would always return. When Jonathan sympathizes with David, Saul is enraged and even tries to kill him. Through the intervention of Jonathan he is spared for a time, but Saul's hatred finally forces him to flee from the court. After the tragic end of King Saul and his successors in the battlefield, David becomes King of all Israel and thus the age is known as 'the rise of David'. In the observation of William J. Doorly, David's actions are justified:

> for he keeps himself faithful to God for ever except once, the rise of David had two purposes, however. Not only are the activities of David justified, blamed on the unreasonable persecution by a troubled Saul, defeating David's desire to be a loyal and faithful subject, but there is a second theme concerning David's relationship with Yahweh. (55)

David was trained in the school of suffering during the days of exile. According to the Bible, David achieved one military triumph after another against all of Israel's neighbours.

David and his son, Solomon, made Israel a powerful empire for the first and the last time. It was a common belief in the Jewish tradition that their Messiah should

necessarily be a descendant of the House of David, because David was anointed as God's chosen leader. Most early Christian literature, except for the Gospel of Mark, makes a point of describing Jesus as a descendant of David. Because of this, Christians have tended to idealize David as the leader and a powerful king, chosen by God. Steven L McKenzie in his biography, *King David,* stresses David's meekness and trust in God:

> David's meekness was apparent as he fled before his son. He was not vengeful or retaliatory but trusted his fate to Yahweh. He went forward in humility with his head and his feet bared, weeping. When he was ridiculed by Shimei, he resisted the impulse of Abishai, one of the harsh sons of Zeruiah, to kill him. Instead, he trusted Yahweh to deal with his suffering. (165)

In the novel, *The Power and the Glory,* the whisky priest is the object of two pursuits - the human and the divine. On the human level, he is pursued by the police lieutenant, who wants to wipe out the last remnants of Catholic religion in the State; on the divine level, he is pursued by God, the Hound of Heaven, who pursues the sinful priest, "down the labyrinthine ways to his own salvation" (PG. 112). The priest acts as a scapegoat for his people. Twice he seeks safety; twice he is called back to administer the last rites to the dying. There is no escape and he does not stop baptizing, hearing confessions and saying Mass, even at the risk of his own death in mortal sin. The Catholics of Tabasco need his sacramental powers to be free from their sins. Raising no protest, in a spirit of Christian forbearance, he takes patiently all

their sins upon himself. The priest as a scapegoat presents the reader with a vivid image of the high priest, Christ. In enduring sacrificial suffering for others he becomes Christ-like. Unimaginable glory pools around the priest's death, because he dies for the half-hearted and the corrupt just as Christ died for all the depravity in the world: "It was for this world that Christ had died; the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death. It was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful . . . it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt. He said, 'why do you tell me all this?'" (PG. 97). Tabasco represents the world, where the order of the people has been shattered by original sin and in consequence, whose wills have become weakened and inclined towards evil. The priest here represents the soul of everyman and the search for the priest by the police indicates God's search for the human soul. By picturing the soul's progress to God, Greene emphasizes the nature of man's relation to his creator.

In the novel, good and evil, weakness and strength etc. are truly mingled and blueprinted in the central character of the priest. He is a lonely man, forced by the nature of his vocation to bear the burden of others' guilt, but at the same time, ever conscious of his own. The priest is fleeing not only from the police but also from his own self. William Rose Benet, in *The Saturday Review*, supports this idea:

> For the priest is anointed; he is not actually fleeing God as the poet was in Francis Thompson's 'Hound of Heaven', he is fleeing his own fear, praying desperately to preserve his loyalty to the greatest thing he knows, with all mankind, as it seems to him, arrayed against him, and no rest for the sole of his foot. He is trying still to carry the Host in his hands for the preservation

> of the souls of the ignorant and simple whose souls are in his keeping. (5)

The whisky priest, for all his inadequacies, though isolated and bewildered, finds courage to carry on his vocation and to attend to the needs of his people.

Gangeshwar Rai in his book, *Graham Greene: An Existential Approach* describes the priest's isolated life during the time of religious persecution:

> Being the last priest, he takes upon himself, at the risk of his life, the task of carrying God to the people. During the perilous journey he performs through the mountains and forests, he encounters people who signify some important aspects of the human condition and gains a better understanding of himself and life. (45)

He hides like a tramp in the banana station of Captain Fellows, whose daughter, Coral gives him food. He goes to the village where his mistress and daughter live, only to realize that, since the policemen are in search of him, there is not a village in the State where he would be welcomed. He cannot go even to his native village, Carmen, for fear of someone taking his life. He is utterly and completely alone, except for the company of his Judas-like temporary traveling companion. The most important connection the priest makes is, when he has to spend the night in a jail-cell full of the poor and the worn out, the ordinary people of Mexico who are suffering tremendously under the new government. In the prison cell he has a feeling of communion with his fellow prisoners. Touched by an extraordinary affection, he feels that he is just "one criminal among a herd of criminals . . ." (PG. 128) and becomes aware that the world is like a prison: "overcrowded with lust and crime and unhappy love" (PG. 125). They

give him a respectful distance once they discover he is actually a priest, but his experience with them helps rekindle the courage to go on, even though he knows, it will lead to his death.

The priest suffers physically in a country of suffering. Even the lieutenant seems to be inspired by the priest's suffering. He realizes the genuine power and the glory of the priest and says thus: "Well, you're going to be a martyr - you've got that satisfaction" (PG. 196). Suffering, humility and poverty are seen in the novel as the offerings to God. With the introduction of Roman Catholicism in this novel, guilt or anxiety is associated with the consciousness of sin because any religious experience asserts our responsibility to God. In the Old Testament one finds David's confession to God, "Against thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51.4). In a sermon to the villagers, the priest exalts pain and suffering, and the presence of evil, as part of God's plan:

> That's why I tell you that heaven is here: This is a part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure. . . . Pray that you will suffer more and more. Never get tired of suffering. The police watching you, the soldiers gathering taxes, the beating you always get from the jefe because you are too poor to pay, smallpox and fever, hunger . . . that is all part of heaven - the preparation. (PG. 69)

The Divine message of Jesus Christ is also incorporated well in the novel: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven . . . Blessed are the meek . . . Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst . . . for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5.3-6). Although the priest attains holiness through suffering, the author depicts him weaker

than the lieutenant of the law.

The New Testament glorifies the value of suffering in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8.18). Greene portrays the whisky priest as corrupt and the police lieutenant as incorruptible. Even the police lieutenant calls the priest as “a traitor to the republic” (PG. 86). At the same time, there is another priest, Padre Jose, who saved his life by obeying the Governor’s order that all priests should break their religious vow of celibacy and should get married. De Vitis, in his book *Graham Greene*, remarks that “the failure of the priest allows Greene to work within the anatomy of sainthood” (78). Greene pictures the priest as a weak man in flesh and as a ‘Whisky priest’ with an illegitimate daughter. Another important feature of the novel is seen in the words of Maria Couto, “it expresses a confrontation between the themes of social justice and faith . . . here religion and politics, the Church and the state are in opposite camps” (69). The real human predicament is presented here. The lieutenant, as the devil’s agent, is strong in his desire to destroy God’s image on earth; whereas the priest as God’s representative, is weak in defending God’s image.

There is not only a constant conflict between good and evil, but also between the religion and the state in the world. Being the last representative of the church, the priest in the novel is determined in his faith and profession and is very much aware of his priestly duties. Hunger is not a problem for the priest; but he is worried of the enemies around him. He seeks his safety only through liquor, which is obviously

pictured in the following lines. Captain Fellows said,

> ‘You’d better wait till dark’. ‘You don’t want to be caught’.
>
> ‘No’.
>
> ‘Hungry?’
>
> ‘A little. It does not matter’. He said with a rather repulsive humility, ‘If you would do me a favor . . .’
>
> ‘What?’
>
> ‘A little brandy’ . . .
>
> ‘What a religion’ Captain Fellows said. ‘Begging for brandy. Shameless’. (PG. 38)

Throughout the novel, the readers find his clandestine religious service without even seeking his safety. When Coral asks about his own safety the priest expresses his inner conflict between good and evil:

> ‘Can’t you escape from here?’
>
> ‘I tried. A month ago. The boat was leaving and then I was summoned.’
>
> ‘Somebody needed you?’ . . . . (PG. 39)

Since, all the other priests have fled or been shot or have made their submission to the State by marrying, the ‘Whisky priest’ is the only surviving priest in the State to absolve the sin of Catholics, and he is troubled by his pursuers throughout the State with a price on his head. He is pictured as a bad priest - a whisky priest - with an illegitimate daughter Brigitta and is given to excessive drinking. Yet, he tries to perform the religious service in secret and ultimately this exposes himself to his enemies. The climax of the novel can be seen when the priest is thrown into prison

and

condemned to death.

In part I chapter I of *The Power and the Glory*, as the novel opens, the readers find Mr. Tench, a dentist, who happens to meet a stranger, waiting for the boat. Mr. Tench is amazed at two things: to hear him speak English and to find a bottle of liquor in his bag. The stranger is none other than the priest who is about to escape. He suddenly gives up the chance in order to visit a woman, who is sick. In chapter III, one finds the serious inquiries done by the police lieutenant at Captain Fellows' house, where his daughter, Coral, shelters the priest. But she is able to tackle the lieutenant quite successfully. Part II, chapter 1 centres on the priest's arrival in the village where his illegitimate daughter, Brigitta, lives. This episode occurs when the priest sees his daughter, the fruit of his sin, after a period of six years. The priest struggles to decide whether he should stay and say Mass to the villagers and risk capture and certain death or flee to the safety of a neighboring State. But just then, the police lieutenant arrives and starts interrogating the entire people in the village one after the other. Maria's contextual intervention saves the priest from being suspected as priest:

> 'Your name?' . . . 'Montez'
>
> 'Have you ever seen the priest?'
>
> 'No' . . .
>
> 'Are you married?'
>
> 'Yes.'
>
> 'which is your wife?'
>
> Maria suddenly broke out, 'I am his wife . . . Do you think *he* looks like a

> priest?' . . . He put his hand down to Brigitta's head and said, 'Look up. You know everyone in this village, don't you?'
>
> 'Yes' she said.
>
> 'Who's that man, then? What's his name?'
>
> 'I don't know' the child said. The lieutenant caught his breath.
>
> 'You don't know his name?' he said. 'Is he a stranger?'
>
> Maria cried, 'why, the child doesn't know her own name. Ask her who her father is?'
>
> 'Who's your father?'
>
> The child stared up at the lieutenant and then turned her knowing eyes upon the priest.
>
> . . . The child said, 'That's him. There' (PG. 75-76).

The priest feels an overwhelming sense of responsibility for his child, Brigitta. He cannot help loving her but to love her is to love his sin. And because he loves his sin, he feels incapable of repentance. One cannot at all miss the dichotomy between the words in preaching and deeds in actual life keenly experienced by the whisky priest, when he tells the pious woman in the prison-cell, that he does not know how to repent:

> He said, 'I don't know how to repent.' That was true: he had lost the faculty. He couldn't say to himself that he wished his sin had never existed, because the sin seemed to him now so important - and he loved the fruit of it. He needed a confessor to draw his mind slowly down the drab passages which led to grief and repentance. (PG. 128)

Greene has depicted the priest in the novel as a man of God and knows how far from the glory of God he has fallen. J. P. Kulshrestha also dwells on the need of sinner's repentance to attain God's forgiveness and asserts:

> The question of a sinner's repentance to ensure God's forgiveness arises in *The Power and the Glory*. If by repentance we mean the turning away of the sinner once and for all from every sin, however small, then the priest does not repent. If however, we mean by repentance the gradual passing of the sinner, slowly and painfully, with periodic lapses, from the side of devil to that of God, then the priest does repent. (81)

Similarly, we find King David, when at the height of his power, was a ruler respected by all the nations from the Euphrates to the Nile. The war with the Ammonites is recorded fully because, while his army was in the battle field, David fell into the sins of adultery and murder, bringing thereby great calamities on himself and his people. David is considered to be a man after the Lord's own heart, even despite his murder of Uriah and adultery with his wife, Bethsheba. He is the author of many of the Psalms. In the 2nd Samuel chapter 12, we find two most striking short sentences. One such a sentence is spoken by Nathan: "Thou art the man!"(7) And the other is a confession by David: "I have sinned against the Lord" (13). David's open declaration, regarding his personal life, throws light on the nature of his repentance as stated in Psalms 32 and 51. Psalm 51 can be considered to be David's prayer of repentance. It is one of the most moving Psalms in the Bible. David was human to the core and was a humble man. He said to God:

> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Ps. 51.2-5)

God was merciful to David, but surely there was a price to be paid. For the rest of his life David faced problems after problems. The child that was born to Bathsheba died shortly after birth:

> And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shall not die . . . the child also that is born unto thee shall die . . . it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth . . . neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died . . . Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped. (2 Sam. 12.13b-20)

David did not excuse or justify himself. He did not blame Bathsheba. He openly admitted his fault and accepted full responsibility. Even before completing the period of repentance for the sin, God pardoned him, because his contrition was so sincere and hearty. David feels sincere regret over his guilt and surrenders himself to God: “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34.18). The Gospel according to St. Luke speaks about the heavenly joy

over a sinner with a contrite heart: “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke. 15.7).

We find similarity in the sacrificial attitude and the spirit of prayer reflected in King David in the Holy Bible and the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory.* The whisky priest feels great responsibility for his child, Brigitta, the fruit of his sin. He loves her so deeply that he may sacrifice even his own life for her good fortune: “He prayed silently, ‘O God, give me any kind of death - without contrition, in a state of sin - only save this child’ ” (PG.82). He even implores Maria to bring up the child as a good Christian with all the virtues: “And the child,’ he said, ‘you’re a good woman, Maria. I mean - you’ll try and bring her up well as a Christian . . . The next Mass I say will be for her” (PG. 79). Greene depicts the whisky priest as a man who is supposed to save souls. But his child can not accept such a father whom she has not met in the span of her life all the six years. Moreover, she has heard many ill tidings about him and about her illegal birth from others. Conceiving her hatred towards him, the priest tries to convince her of his sincere love and his desire to protect and groom her in faith:

> He went down on his knees and pulled her to him, while she giggled and struggled to be free: ‘I love you. I am your father and I love you. Try to understand that.’ He held her tightly by the wrist and suddenly she stayed still, looking up at him. He said, ‘I would give my life, that’s nothing, my

> soul . . . my dear, my dear, try to understand that you are - so important. That was the difference, he had always known, between his faith and theirs . . . this child was more important than a whole continent. He said, 'you must take care of yourself because you are so . . . but my child, you have all the angels of heaven.' (PG. 82)

The spiritual conflict of the whisky priest is pictured throughout the novel by his personal acknowledgement of guilt and responsibility, the acceptance of his fate in a spirit of humility and hopefulness and his complete trust in God in order to reach salvation and divine grace, very much unlike Scobie in *Heart of the Matter*. The whisky priest welcomes sufferings into his personal life in order to purify himself from his offence against God. He seems to be authentic at spreading the worth of suffering: "Pain is a part of joy . . . That is why I tell you that heaven is here: this is a part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure. He said; pray that you will suffer more and more and more. Never get tired of suffering" (PG. 69). Part II chapter III describes the priest's experiences during the night in the prison-cell. The charge against him is that he is carrying a bottle of brandy. The police still do not know his real and priestly identity. In the prison-cell, he finds himself in the midst of a large crowd of men and women who were prisoners and they were being punished for different offences. He then makes an open confession about himself to his fellow prisoners**:** "He said, Martyrs are holy men . . . No, I tell you I am in a state of mortal sin. I have done things I couldn't talk to you about. I could only whisper them in the confessional" (PG. 127).

In the prison cell, the priest happens to meet mestizo, a Judas-like character,

quite

unexpectedly. The mestizo or a Spanish half-caste, who hails from American-Indian parents, wants to betray the priest by revealing his identity, in order to get the reward of seven hundred pesos for capturing him. He expresses his inner tension and the impossible situation to get the reward because the priest is already in the hands of the police, and that the reward will go to the police and not him: “What have they got you here for? That’s what I want to know. It looks crooked to me. It’s my job, isn’t it, to find you. Who is going to have the reward if they’ve got you already?” (PG. 137) While making a parallel study of the inner struggles and conflicts of the whisky priest with that of the Biblical model King David, we may observe different types of situational tribulations in the lives of both. Like the whisky priest, David also suffered a lot while fulfilling his responsibility as a chosen one. J. Cheryl Exum, in his book, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative*, gives a brief account of the suffering and punishment undergone by David as a result of the two offences committed by David before God: “Yahweh uses David’s children as the *instruments* of their father’s punishment. David’s sins are not only visited upon his children but reenacted by them. Tamar’s rape by Amnon and Amnon’s murder by Absalom reflect David’s sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah” (129).

In the book of 2 Samuel, we find that after a brief mention of four expeditions against the Philistines, the sacred writer records a sin of pride on David’s part in his resolution to take a census of the people. As a penance for this sin, he was given the options of choosing either a famine, or an unsuccessful war, or a pestilence. David chose the third option and in three days seventy thousand of his people died of

pestilence. When the angel was about to strike Jerusalem, God was moved to pity, withheld and stayed the pestilence: “And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand” (2 Sam. 24.16). David was then commanded to offer sacrifice at the threshing-floor, the site of the future temple.

Again when the whisky priest in the novel is about to escape, we find that he is called for service to the death-bed of an American Gangster. He knows that it is a trick and he will be betrayed by the half-caste, the same Judas-figure, who has followed him, all throughout, waiting for just such an occasion, but he cannot and does not refuse to go. He feels that it is his duty to give the man absolution and precisely that is how he is being arrested. But, ironically enough**,** the Gangster refuses to make his confession, for the sake of the priest’s safety.

At the end, the priest suffers great mental pain that he longs for and cherishes the peace of confession, which is quite impossible in such a situation. He feels that he is unworthy to become a martyr without confession and enough grace. Although he is different from other martyrs whom we meet in edifying religious stories, he is yet, one who unhesitatingly goes into the trap which must lead to his death, only because, he cannot refuse a dying man the opportunity for confession and absolution. This action alone speaks volumes about his spirit of self-sacrifice.

In *The Power and the Glory* Greene states the importance of the Roman Catholic Church as he explains its faith and morality. De Vitis tries to convince the readers about Greene’s attitude towards good and evil through his observation:

> In *Brighton Rock*, Greene defined his religious preoccupations in terms of

> allegory: he personified good and evil in Rose and Pinkie. Rose was the central character in a symbolic drama, but, more often than not, her goodness was overshadowed by Pinkie's more fascinating evil. Having defined his poles in *Brighton Rock*, he could go on to combine good and evil in a single individual as he does in *The Power and the Glory*. (78)

The spiritual journey of everyman becomes the main theme of Greene's novels. According to Sharrock, **"**Greene's realistic spiritual psychology, echoed in the thought-process of the priest, fully accepts the limitations of a conditioned being. In a religion of failure, sainthood consists in a further submission of the being to the will of God and his paradoxical purposes" (105).

In the story of the persecution of a priest by a police lieutenant, Greene puts political and secular conventions against spiritual and religious ones. The priest, like the police lieutenant is a complex character capable of both good and evil acts. The lieutenant of police, who burns with zeal to destroy the church, seems duty-bound and unselfish in his ambition. The priest himself recognizes the lieutenant as a "good man" with human feelings but is forced to call his superior a 'corrupt' person. Here, we find Greene's reaction against the present dehumanized civilization and the distorted political situations. The strength of the novel is based on an interesting contrast between the materialistic and the spiritual approach to life. The lieutenant is the direct opponent of the priest in this novel, as Ida is Pinkie's in Greene's another Catholic novel, *Brighton Rock*.

In a critical observation, Karl Patten has described the novel, *The Power and*

the Glory as a book of symbolic identifications. According to him, the structure of the text could be visually described as a wheel in which the whisky priest is compared to the hub and all the other characters to the spokes. This comparison is a strong pattern because in the words of Karl Patten, the picture of a wheel has a sound sense "while it carries the original notion of the wheel, goes beyond to suggest the religious theme of the book and the central symbolic link between the life of the whisky priest and the life of Christ" (102). The whisky priest becomes the human object of the Christ-form. The novel offers the reader a glimpse into the life and death of the whisky priest, analyzing how the form of Christ shapes his sense of self, his relationship to the world and his ultimate destiny.

The whisky priest in fact, illustrates and actualizes the description in Von Balthasar's *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*: "To be a Christian is precisely a form . . . the Christian will realize his mission only if he truly becomes this form which has been willed and instituted by Christ" (Vol. I. p 28). The priest, representing the religious power of God and the lieutenant, representing the limited earthly power are men of faith. While both work for good on earth, their methods differ. The priest has God's love to offer the world; the lieutenant has his grand plans of an earthly utopia in which the church and its religion are absent. At times, they recognize each other's goodness. As De Vitis remarks, the two characters "are doubles in the Dostoevskian and Conradian sense . . . each suggesting what the other should be, each accenting the pity that is in the other while denying the evil" (75).

The priest's pursuer, the nameless lieutenant, is fervently anti-clerical and believes that the church preaches false promises to the people. The priest travels

throughout Mexico, always just ahead of the lieutenant. They meet on three separate occasions; during the first two, the lieutenant fails to recognize the priest and on the third encounter, however, the priest is captured due to the betrayal of a half-caste, the mestizo. On his travels, the priest visits a banana plantation, goes to the village where his illegitimate daughter, Brigitta, lives, takes refuge with a German couple, and spends time in prison for possessing alcohol. The priest is trapped and captured as he tries to give the last rites to a dying American bandit. After his capture the priest is executed.

The novel ends with the arrival of yet another fugitive priest, as a legacy of the firmly-built foundation of the Church. The whisky-priest laid down his life in such an insecure situation of religious persecution only to keep the flame of faith burning for the next generation. Greene does not judge the priest for his sins in fathering a child and neither do the villagers, but the priest cannot help but feel the guilt of his sin. He feels guilt because he was the only priest most of them had ever known. He had felt nothing but regret; and it was utterly difficult for him even to feel shame when no one blamed him.

But King David was criticized, punished and was forced to make self-judgment on his own sin, by Prophet Nathan. David's son Solomon, who was born after his repentance, was chosen in preference to his elder brothers. To make sure that Solomon would succeed to the throne, David himself had him publicly anointed. While God was pleased with David's desire to build a Temple, he was not permitted to build it. The privilege of building God's house had been reserved for Solomon but David made

ample preparations for the work by abundant treasures and materials, as well as by giving his son a plan for the building and all its details. David senses that God really understands human beings and so he appeals to the compassion and mercy of God. The Law of Moses does not encourage any kind of sacrifices for the sins of willfulness. There is no mask for those sins, so he requests God to 'blot them out.' He feels more estranged and alienated from a God who is Holy. The nature of God is basically not love, grace and mercy but holiness. The admonitory word of God to mankind is, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Pet. 1.16). So we are to believe that everything God does is only in the context and framework of His Holiness. If God is to have mercy, compassion and grace toward David, he too must be Holy. So David realizes there has to be a washing and a cleansing of him by God. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. 12.13). With an unclean heart David knew that he cannot go through the rituals and he says that he wants to blot it out thoroughly. He asks God to wash him thoroughly from his iniquity and cleanse him of each and every spot related to sin on him.

The whole of the Bible is the revelation of God. God reveals himself in the Scriptures, and is making David reveal himself. God makes David undergo all the mental pain and spiritual struggles. David was the king, God's anointed ruler and the example to all Israel. Priests, prophets and Kings were God's men; God's vicars; and God's substitutes. They were the visible manifestations of God in the kingdom of Israel. Israel had to look at David and see God; Israel had to look at Nathan and see God; for they were like pastors, elders, and the chosen ones and they were model

Christians. Crimes are offences against people, but sin is only against God, in that it breaks His laws. David had broken at least three laws. “Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s wife” (Exod. 20.17). David breaks this law and coveted his neighbour, Uriah’s wife. Again the law says, “Thou shall not commit adultery” (Exod. 20.14). And David committed adultery. David had broken a third law against homicide**,** which says, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exod. 20.13). He committed the sin of murder, by killing Uriah, indirectly with an evil intention of hiding his sin of adultery and thus of possessing his wife. One failure is all it takes to make us unrighteous, and thus worthy of death. Thus says the Holy Bible: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point has become guilty of all” (James. 2.10). Thus, here David is forced to break three laws one after another mechanically, without thinking.

After the real repentance and atonement of King David, God deliberately chooses the second child of David and Bathsheba. He began to love Bathsheba as a woman and as a wife. So far she has been only a useful object to satisfy his lust. But when God broke him, he went to her and comforted her, and she was shifted from “Uriah’s wife” to “his wife.” Because he had already confessed when Bathsheba conceived Solomon, it was made a child of a holy marriage. The marriage came about by adultery and murder, but it was cleansed so they could actually have a sanctified marriage. So God was pleased with David and told him: “Call him ‘Solomon’. He is going to build my temple, David. And more than that call him Jedidiah, ‘beloved of Yahweh.’ That is how thoroughly I have cleansed you from sin and forgotten it. You do not have to look me in the eye with shame at all” (2 Sam. 12.24-25).

The life of whisky priest may also be justified because it is believed that human soul at its depth is involved in a direct struggle with God. There is nothing better than our love of God and there is nothing more important than our belief in God. His feelings for his fellow-sinners are warm and touching. He cannot restrain himself from offering absolution to the sinners even when there is no faith in them. He has been a poor vessel of God to make God's grace available to the people through the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confession. Despite his past sinful life, one can find the priest as exactly similar to the good thief on the cross, who wins Paradise with Jesus within the span of a few seconds. Similarly, we find David so generous and sympathetic that he takes no hostility against Saul. J. Cheryl Exum supports this view in his book, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative*:

> Whatever its motivation, David's refusal to kill Yahweh's anointed is one of those grand gestures that can only endear him to the people he will one day rule, even if his followers might prefer more immediate action. Between the two accounts of David's sparing Saul's life, the virtuous reputation David has been building for restraint is tested. (124)

David's generous and forgiving nature is depicted in the Holy Bible as a mysterious model to his followers. David's awe and respect towards Yahweh and to His anointed is reflected through the above incident.

Even though the story under discussion is so convincing to those who look up to the priest as a hero, he seems a coward, weak, unchaste and foolish. Greene makes us believe that God, being the good shepherd, is so compassionate to accept all the miserable sinners. In order to experience the compassionate love of God, all that we

need to do is to keep our trust in Him. If the whisky priest dies as a martyr, despite his moral failures he has a perfect claim to be a saint. He is a prime example of the sinner who might become a saint. He is neither noble nor faithful, but in administering the Sacraments at the risk of his own life, he elevates himself to be a broken instrument of divine grace. For Greene, the priest is more than a man. He is God's representative, who literally brings the blood and body of Christ, through the Eucharist, to the villagers. The Sacramental action of the priest is the sole means to make God's grace present and available to the world. This duty of priesthood emphasizes a direct relationship to God in which all share through the actions of the priest. Greene's imagination focuses on the firm mediation of the Sacraments specifically of Confession and Eucharist as a means to save one's soul. One finds the intensity of the inner conflicts of the priest as he struggles between the two horns of his dilemma as of his duty to the Church and his duty to save his own life.

Greene corroborates the point that the priest should be judged sympathetically and stresses the humanness of the priest but at the same time does not blame him for being human. Greene pictures the priest as a person, who is entangled within the meshes of struggles with his conscience, with his duties to the church and to his illegitimate daughter. Although Greene does not give his own judgment of the priest and his spiritual fate, there are multifarious proofs to show the fact that he believes the priest wins God's grace and goes to heaven. That is why he attributes these words to him: "He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted – to be a

saint" (PG. 210).

While the priest thinks of himself as sinful, useless and graceless, Greene only likens him to a saint. Marie-Francoise Allain asserts that for Greene, "venial sins like impatience, an unimportant lie, pride, neglected opportunity etc., cut you off from grace more completely than the worst sins of all" (OM. 139). Even when the priest feels that he has no merit in the eyes of God or his church or even his own daughter, Greene interjects his own ideology to show that the priest is really worthy of grace.

Greene presents a dual picture of the protagonist of the novel, the whiskey priest. On the one hand, the priest is a drunken sinner who has broken his vows to Catholicism by fathering a child, he struggles with his moral conscience and holds himself unworthy of God's grace and imagines himself as useless to his parishioners. On the other hand, Greene shows the priest to be the best sort of man and the best priest, who sacrifices his own life in order to administer God's work to his people. This is the man that Greene wishes the reader to see and projects before him, one who goes to be captured while giving confession to a dying American bandit. He is a man who inspires the lieutenant who hunts him down and demands of him to find a former priest to hear his confession and bring him brandy to help ease his discomfort in jail. While the priest struggles with his own demons and moral obligations, Greene carefully and consistently presents the reader with an alternative. For Greene, the ideas of God's grace are not clear, it seems, but he indicates that a man must be judged on his actions and not his moral shortcomings. The priest suffers through his choices and Greene does not come to an ultimate conclusion regarding the spiritual fate of the priest. At the end of his life, the priest torments himself with his sense of

failure and his hope or fond-hope whether he would become a saint. The suffering priest easily identifies his own condition with the fallen state of humanity. Marie-Beatrice Mesnet comments in this connection: “One of the greatest mysteries of the spiritual world is the communion of all men in evil and in good, the communion of saints and sinners – for we are never alone, as the whisky-priest knew. We share responsibility for our sins, as we share love; our destiny is linked with that of other men” (105).

The awareness of the sense of fellowship in such a miserable situation, points out the delicacy of the sinful state of the priest. On the night before his execution, the priest is grief-stricken. Greene writes: “He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed with nothing done at all” (PG.210). Part III Chapter III of the novel focuses on the previous night of his execution. Before the execution, the priest’s thoughts dwell on his feelings of worthlessness and broods over it, but Greene cuts off the priest’s introspection. The priest can only think of the ‘few communions’ and ‘few confessions’ of his eight years on the run and feels that he has not fulfilled his obligations as a servant of God.

Greene presents the deep-rooted feelings of the priest as he comes across with the tangible knowledge that he will soon die. The priest feels so dejected and unworthy of grace and he is unable to face the fact that he did not fulfill his responsibility as a priest. Greene reminds the reader of this when he shows the sacrifice of the life of the priest. All the same, Greene does not allow the reader to witness the actual execution of the priest: his death is told through the eyes of the

dentist, Mr. Tench, who is the first person to meet the priest. In the end, Greene detaches himself from the priest; he shows the execution happening: “quickly like a routine. The officer stepped aside, the rifles went up, and the little man suddenly made jerky movements with his arms . . . Then there was a single shot . . . and the little man was a routine heap beside the wall” (PG. 216).

Although the priest has broken his vows and fathered a child during his life span, it should be asserted that he is nevertheless on his way to heaven: “He was moved by an irrational affection for the inhabitants of this prison. A phrase came to him: ‘God so loved the world . . .’He said, ‘my children, you must never think the holy martyrs are like me. You have a name for me . . . I am a whisky priest. I am in here now because they found a bottle of brandy in my pocket” (PG. 127). Here, Greene has pictured the inner stress and responsibility in the priest’s soul. He has told the story of a truly spiritual struggle, in the heart of a miserable sinner. The sinner, of course, is called a ‘traitor’ by the police lieutenant in part II, chapter I of the novel:

> The lieutenant said, ‘I am looking for two men – one is a gringo, a Yankee, a murderer. I can see very well he is not here. There is a reward of five hundred pesos for his capture . . . ‘The other’, the lieutenant said, ‘is a priest.’ He raised his voice: ‘You know what that means – a traitor to the republic. Anyone who shelters him is a traitor too.’ . . . ‘If you’ve seen this priest, speak up. There’s a reward of seven hundred pesos.’ (PG. 74-75)

The priest, who is the protagonist in the novel, has the same inner struggle experienced by the Biblical character, Job, as pictured in the *Book of Job* in the Old Testament.

Job is introduced in the Bible as an extremely rich man, who is highly God-fearing. Even though he is subjected to the loss of everything he possessed, he still keeps his faith and wholehearted devotion to God. Even when he is subjected to personal physical suffering he maintains his identity and does not renounce God:

> And The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown . . . and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips?. (Job. 2.6-10)

The whisky priest, for all his failures and his sins, is faithful to the call of duty. As the priest enters the village after a long break, he is requested by the people to say the Mass, hear confessions, and also to baptize their children:

> The first man he saw took off his hat, knelt and kissed the priest's hand . . . 'Is there to be Mass in the morning, father?' 'Yes. There is to be Mass.' A woman kissed the priest's hand; . . . she asked, 'Father, will you hear our confessions?' He said. 'Yes. Yes. In Senor Lehr's barn. Before the Mass.' And, Father, there are many children to be baptized. There has not been a priest for three years. (PG. 166)

In the words of Mesnet, "he never ceases to believe in God's mercy and love and in

the eternal character of his priesthood" (89). He did not renounce his faith, inspite of religion being outlawed in the country. This can be seen from the conversation between the priest and Coral as she asks him to give up his religion: "'But can't you,' she said logically, 'just give yourself up?' . . . 'There's the pain . . . You see, my Bishop is no longer here . . . This is my parish'. She said, 'of course you could – renounce' . . . He said, 'It's impossible. There's no way. I'm a priest. It's out of my power" (PG. 40).

When Coral asks the priest about his safety, he expresses his helplessness due to the urgency brought about by the inner conflict between good and evil: "Can't you escape from here?' 'I tried a month ago. The boat was leaving and then I was summoned.' 'Somebody needed you?" (PG.39). Here, the priest cannot openly perform his priestly duties because of the ban on the religious practice that has been imposed by the Government. In order to continue his secret service to the Church, he goes about visiting various villages and performing his priestly duties. Kurismmoottil summarizes it well:

> A priest is ordained to repeat and continue Christ's mission to the world, and this is the basis for his dignity . . . Despite his weaknesses, the whisky priest does try to live up to his vocation. Daring persecution, he stays on to preach to the poor, to console the sick . . . He is tempted in the wilderness. He is denied by everyone and betrayed and finally, after a prolonged period of trial, is executed for his faith (87).

The priest can also be compared to the good shepherd, who is ready to sacrifice his own life for the sheep. Thus says the good shepherd, Jesus Christ: "As the Father

knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John. 10.15). Though the priest acts as a good shepherd, it is assumed that, the priest has on the other hand, been declared a traitor to the State by the lieutenant and a reward has been promised to anyone providing information leading to his capture.

The priest himself is aware of this dangerous situation, and expresses his insecurity: ". . . for surely one of these people will betray me first. A long train of thought began, which led him to announce after a while, they are offering a reward for me. Five hundred, six hundred, pesos I'm not sure" (PG. 153). It should not be forgotten that there are several occasions on which the priest could have escaped from the country to safety. But then he cannot fail to provide the comfort to those who are suffering. The whisky-priest in *The Power and the Glory*, says to the lieutenant: "I don't know a thing about the mercy of God: I don't know how awful the human heart looks to him. But I do know this – that if there's been a single man in this State damned, then I'll be damned too" (PG. 200).

There are some Biblical echoes found in the novel. As the priest responds to a sick man, he misses the steamer and is captured by the authority. The priest in this context, may be described as the slave of his people like that of the sacrificial victim, the suffering servant described in the Book of Isaiah. The priest can be called the suffering servant of Yahweh and a true comparison with Christ as depicted in the Book of Isaiah would not be out of place here:

> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; . . . Surely he hath borne

> our griefs, and carried our sorrows: . . . he was wounded for our transgressions . . . He was oppressed . . . afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter . . . he was taken from prison . . . He shall see of the travail of his soul. (Is. 53.3-11)

The priest tells the people that joy always depends on pain, that pain is a part of joy. Thus says the priest in a tone of authority: "that is why I tell you that heaven is here: this is a part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure,' He said, pray that you will suffer more and more. Never get tired of suffering" (PG. 69). He also preaches to his fellow-prisoners about the beauty of suffering. "Such a lot of beauty. Saints talk about the beauty of suffering. Well, we are not saints . . ." (PG. 130). Like St. John of the Cross, the priest has undergone a period of spiritual darkness and purgatory with real contrition of heart. In *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Book II, Chapter 6, St. John gives this idea: "In as much as God is now purifying the soul in its sensual and spiritual substance, its interior and exterior powers, it is necessary for it that it should be in all its relations empty, poor and abandoned, in aridity, emptiness and darkness" (DN.91). Through a life of loneliness in the wilderness of mountains, the priest is purified of his sins and achieves spiritual enrichment. While talking to the lieutenant also, the priest emphasizes the value of suffering, even though the lieutenant makes fun of the priest's view. Kurismmoottil also is of a similar view: "The priest is a 'desert–experience', and he must do it alone . . . There is no end in view to his travails, to the anguish, to the hopelessness. Spiritual writers call this, "the dark night of the soul" (89). In the eyes of the lieutenant, suffering is never desirable or even necessary; it is always wrong as well as unwelcome. But in the eyes of the whisky priest, "joy always

depends on pain. Pain is part of joy. We are hungry and then think how we enjoy our food at last" (PG. 69).

In the Holy Bible, Christ is depicted as a suffering servant, betrayed by Judas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. The priest in the novel finds a Judas-figure in Mestizo, who intends to betray him for money. Greene tries to picture the image of Christ in the priest: "He prayed silently, 'God forgive me.' Christ had died for this man too . . . This man intended to betray him for money which he needed" (PG. 99). St. John, in the Gospel, portrays the betrayal of Jesus Christ thus: "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, 'I am he'. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them" (John. 18.4-5).

The priest risking his own safety goes to hear the dying Yankee's confession. Mestizo knows that the priest cannot refuse. In this way, he betrays the priest and the lieutenant takes him into custody. Thus Mestizo plays a crucial role in the novel. Like Judas, "the half-caste was no longer in sight" (PG. 190), after his duty. Regarding this, Richard Kelly suggests: "After the lieutenant captures the priest, Greene provides an extended dialogue between these two nameless figures that forms a disputation which lies at the heart of his parable of good and evil" (51).

The lieutenant has allowed the priest to stay with the dying gangster without having interrupted him. The lieutenant's total disbelief in the Christian doctrine is very clearly indicated in this novel: ". . . instead of food, they talk to you about heaven. Oh, everything will be fine after you are dead, they say. I tell you –

everything will be fine when they are dead, and you must help" (PG. 74). De Vitis also agrees to this view: "The lieutenant argues that the priest, although himself a good man, is a danger to the well-being of the State and that his destruction is necessary to secure that well-being" (81).

Thus, the lieutenant of police becomes the whisky priest's direct opponent as Ida challenges Pinkie in Greene's *Brighton Rock*. Since the names of the lieutenant and the whisky priest are not given, they are symbolic representatives of the power of the state and the glory of God. As Judith Adamson comments; "we know them merely by their professional labels: behind the labels worlds of the life and death are conveyed" (119). Greene's portrayal of the lieutenant develops the motives of the power and authority and, primarily, the lieutenant's opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. Greene depicts these views in the nature of a debate between the whisky priest and the lieutenant. Here he tries to balance the conflicting elements of good and evil in them. David Pryce-Jones points out, "if the balance were correctly held, it would show the priest's superiority . . ." (52). According to Mesnet, "God's enemy is no longer a simple force of nature: he symbolizes the modern Prometheus" (25).

Thus, the conflict of good and evil remains more powerful throughout the novel. Though the priest has no intention of feeling angry with the police officer, something in his tone infuriates the lieutenant and so, the latter says: "you're a danger. That's why we kill you. I have nothing against you" (PG. 193). Convinced of the Christian faith and doctrines the priest utters: "It's God you're against" (PG. 194). The lieutenant says in a tone of fury: "Well, you're going to be a martyr" (PG. 196). But, the priest is always aware of his unworthiness and simultaneously guilty of his

sinfulness. He then expresses: “oh, no. Martyrs are not like me. They don’t think all the time - If I had drunk more brandy I shouldn’t be so afraid” (PG. 196). Lamba suggests the intensity of the priest’s inner struggle thus:

> He is worried that he cannot do anything to redeem himself . . . He understands that evil and sin become a part of his life . . . He is afraid of dying in a state of mortal sin, because he believes in God and Christianity. . . . Bad and corrupt as he is, yet he is not deprived of the grace of God. He redeems himself by his repentance. (25)

Greene also believes in the Catholic doctrine of salvation and reflects his faith in the Church through the priest: “He thought; ‘if I go, I shall meet other priests: I shall go to confession. I shall feel contrition and be forgiven: eternal life will begin for me all over again. ‘The Church taught that it was every man’s first duty to save his own soul. The simple ideas of hell and heaven moved in his brain” (PG. 74). *The Power and the Glory*, thus illustrates how a priest can be subjected to temptation and still remain authentic to his priesthood. Lamba here suggests that, “the interior monologue of the priest reveals the agony of the soul that despite the weakness of flesh is yet pure and is touched by grace” (26).

Like Scobie, in *The Heart of the Matter*, the whisky priest is painfully aware of his sins but unable to make an act of contrition. He is humiliated by his feeling of self-emptiness before God. He accepts his fate in a state of complete humility and trust in God. In a way, though he is aware of his evil and sin like Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*, he is not able to save himself from the predicament of destruction. The priest, being a

miserable sinner is never sure of being redeemed. Even in the prison, he tries to save many souls by consoling the sick and preaching to the poor. He talks to a fellow-prisoner, a woman about the beauty of suffering and sin: “I wouldn’t mind suffering . . . we discover that our sins have so much beauty . . .” (PG. 155). Greene suggests that the problem of evil and suffering is the one which our finite intelligence cannot grasp. It is one of the most profound mysteries that we face in our lives.

Greene is pre-occupied with the theme of betrayal in many of his works. For instance, in *The Man Within*, Andrews betrays to the authorities a gang of smugglers, previously led by his father. Raven in *A Gun for Sale* is betrayed by Anne in whom he had put all his trust. The terror of life is expressed with grim force in *Brighton Rock*, where it is seen that when the little waitress Rose tells Pinkie, ‘life is not so bad,’ Pinkie responds thus: “. . . It is jail . . . worms and cataract, cancer . . . You hear them shrieking from the upper window - children being born. It’s dying slowly” (BR. 304). Greene believes that the fall of Adam and Eve was a catastrophe and man suffers permanently as a result. Different individuals may experience suffering in different ways. Greene however does not stop with the description of suffering and evil. He takes meticulous pain to explain the inevitability of suffering and evil in this world especially from the point of view of Christian religion. According to Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, “Spirituality is intimately connected with the experience of suffering. A sensitive awareness of evil and a capacity for suffering are attributes of the spiritual man. Our miseries and all the obstacles we meet in our path help to develop our spiritual personality” (94).

Greene, thus points out the purgative value of suffering in his works. The

whisky priest is a striking example of the spiritual enrichment that may follow a life of sin and suffering. In the prison, he experiences a strange communion with those who are suffering like him. Greene points out the reality that we are born to suffer in this world. He believed that only suffering can save us and only death can end our suffering. Thus, in Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory*, with his remarkable birthmark of priesthood, ultimately the whisky priest is led to martyrdom. The suffering of the soul without God is symbolized by the suffering of the priest in flight. And the soul's surrender to love is symbolized by the perfect act of contrition made by the Priest in prison awaiting execution: ". . . he was not at the moment afraid of damnation – even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all" (PG. 210).

One may find some similarity between the whisky priest and King David at the point of revealing their sin of fornication and adultery respectively. God makes David reveal his weakness that occurred during the time of hard battle between Israel and other non-believers. In the novel, the whisky priest could not hide his weakness, as he was a refugee in a Catholic colony at the period of religious persecution in Mexico. The two episodes are focused in the dark background of the battle between good and evil. It is also assumed that there was a tough battle of good and evil in the minds of these two characters where their minds were set to be the battlefields. God specially chooses both David and the whisky priest with particular responsibilities which could not be substituted by anyone else. Both of them stand as the foundation stones for the

Temple of God and the future Church respectively. In the novel, the priest's duty is to maintain and carry on the secret religious service during the time of religious persecution in order to defend faith and to build the church upon it. As the novel ends, one finds the presence of a young priest, immediately after the martyrdom of the whisky priest, as if to carry on his secret Catholic Services. Similarly, King David has prepared to build the Jerusalem temple for God; but had to hand over the duty to his son, Solomon, of course**,** at the will of Yahweh. Both whisky priest and King David were to set the background for the future Church. King David, who is a public man and happens to be a King with enormous power, is observed and his sinful ways are evaluated by Walter Brueggemann, in *David's Truth*: "The public facade is broken by the depth of human reality. Thus the King who easily usurps the wife of his general is pressed by prophetic faith until he finally indicts himself and is driven to face his sin" (41).

David was the King, God's anointed ruler, the example to all Israel. Even before completing the period of repentance for the sin, God pardoned him, because his contrition was so sincere; but at the same time, severe penalties were announced. The spirit in which David accepted these penalties has made him the model of penitents forever. The incest of Amnon and the vengeance of Absalom brought shame and sorrow to David. For three years Absalom remained in exile. When he was recalled, David ill-treated him for two years more and then restored him to his former dignity. Infuriated by his father's treatment, Absalom finally had himself proclaimed king at Hebron. David was taken by surprise and was forced to flee from Jerusalem. David was able to turn to Yahweh for guidance when he fled from Saul earlier, but now in

his flight from Absalom, he seems confused and cowardly: “And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Ab’sa-lom; make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword” (2 Sam. 15.14).

When David sinned he made an open confession before God: “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51.3). David can’t handle his guilt himself, since it is tormenting him night and day. He believed that his ego has been crushed. But he has been forgiven and cleansed by God. David reveals his conviction that his basic sin was against God and with true repentance when he says, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest” (Ps. 51.4). Then in verses 5 to 9 David makes a plea for spiritual healing. First he sought forgiveness, and now he wants to be made whole again:

> Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. (Ps. 51.5-9)

We are all born blemished and that is why David says “and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51.5). God was merciful to David, but there was a price to be paid.

Nathan told him: “Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord, to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die” (2 Sam. 12.14). Three of his sons caused major problems for him. Thus David’s sin brought many curses on his entire family.

David was very much aware that events often happen because of the hand of God. David was God-conscious, and apart from his sin of adultery and murder, he made God an important part of his life. The *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters* describes the life of David more clearly: “David was a human, who remained faithful to the Lord throughout his life. Though he sinned against God and man grievously, he was a humble man. David’s strength was in the Lord from the beginning to the end of his life” (133). The psalms that are attributed to David show his trust in the Lord: “And David spake unto the Lord . . . The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence” (2 Sam. 22.1-3).

God’s purpose in making man is written right in the Old Testament. God made us “in his *own* image” (Gen. 1.27), and in His likeness. God did not design David to be this way. David has made some evil choices and so he makes a prayer thus, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51.7). He pleads with God to cleanse him. The Jewish people knew very well that only God could cleanse leprosy. But a cleansed leper would still be a scarred person. Similarly, the cleansed David is still a scarred person, and he sees himself as a leper here. He says, “Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast

broken may rejoice" (Ps. 51.8). He wants to be free from the crushing weight of sin and guilt and restore himself singing joyfully to the Lord as in the times before. His words are a beautiful illustration of the mark of true repentance.

In the novel, *The Power and the Glory*, the whisky priest never hides his offence against God and very often we find his silent confession to God. His inner agony with real contrition is expressed in the novel, while being questioned by the lieutenant in the village: "He recited an act of contrition silently with only half a mind - my sins, because they have crucified my loving Saviour . . . but above all because they have offended . . . He was alone in front of the lieutenant – 'I hereby resolve never more to offend Thee" (PG. 75). Similarly, we find David's repentance as a painful process. After the confrontation of David with Nathan, he acknowledges his sin to God without hiding his iniquity. In Psalm 32, David informs us that he was silent about his sin, even though he knew it was wrong: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. 32.3-4). The agony David describes finally made him confess his sins.

David's confession has a special claim that he takes full responsibility for his sins without putting the blame on others. He confesses his sin without any excuses, and explanations and took his sin very seriously that it became a public knowledge. His sin regarding Uriah and Bathsheba was clearly the exception, rather than the rule: "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter

of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings. 15.4-5).

The Holy Bible records David's sins, repentance, and his acts of virtue, his generosity towards Saul, his great faith, and his piety. David was trained in the school of suffering during the days of exile and developed into a military leader of renown. He gave Israel a capital, a court, a great centre of religious worship. When the Ark had been brought to Jerusalem, David undertook the organization of religious worship. If there were ever a man who could have pointed out that his good deeds outweighed his sins, it would have to be David undoubtedly. But instead, we find David confessing his sin, avoiding all reference to anything good he had done, knowing that he deserved God's wrath: "For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51.3-4). David's inner conflicts and struggles are pictured by George Matheson in his evaluation of the heart of David, in the *Portraits of Bible Men*, Vol.2: "David felt the weakness and cried out for a King over himself. He called aloud for someone mighty enough to still the tempest of his heart" (15).

King David, like the prodigal son in the Gospel, knew that he did not deserve God's forgiveness or Divine blessings. He only confessed his sin. Like King David in the Holy Bible, the whisky priest in the novel *The Power and the Glory*, also expresses his consciousness of guilt through his willingness to suffer the consequences of sin. The readers may watch his willingness to accept any kind of martyrdom. Through Maria, with whom he had momentary illegal relationship, Greene tries to point out his idea of martyrdom for the priest, even though in a mocking tone: "She said, 'Suppose you die. You'll be a martyr, won't you? What kind

of a

martyr do you think you'll be? It's enough to make people mock" (PG. 79). The priest knows well that he does not deserve to be a martyr or a saint. To the lieutenant also he said that he is a bad priest: "He said with contempt, 'So you have a child?' 'Yes,' the priest said. 'You - a priest?' 'You mustn't think they are all like me' . . . He said, 'There are good priests and bad priests. It is just that I am a bad priest" (PG. 191).

David's repentance resulted in a renewed joy in the presence and service of God, and a commitment to teach others to turn from sin. From *Psalm 51*, we know that David prayed for a renewal of his joy in the Lord. God responded to David's repentance with grace, and thus David responded graciously to those who wronged him and repented. When Absalom rebelled against his father and was about to take over the kingdom, David fled from Jerusalem with those who followed him. David loved Absalom, even though he seemed to be an enemy. David lamented over the death of his son Absalom in the battle against him and his mourning for his son is described in the Bible thus:

> And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Ab'sa-lom! my son, my son Ab'sa-lom! Would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son! . . . But the King covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Ab'sa-lom! O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son!. (2 Sam. 18.33-19.4)

David's lamentation over the death of his own enemy has been compared to Shakespeare's King Lear by J. Cheryl Exum in his book, *Tragedy and Biblical*

Narrative: ". . . there is something suggestive of King Lear in David's lament, as well as in David's extremity as he flees from Absalom" (148). David was genuinely regretful for his sin and did not repeat it. And so the Lord had forgiven his sins and taken away his punishment of death. The whisky priest should have been shot dead by the police lieutenant along with the other priests, but the Divine mercy forgives his sin of fornication, and lets him continue with his priestly services. Similarly, King David was forgiven by God and was allowed to continue his services as the chosen King and prophet of Israel. Legally, according to the Law of Moses, David should have died, both for his adultery and for the murder of Uriah. Under the Law of Moses, David had no hope. He was a condemned man. But the promise that David will not die follows this statement: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. 12.13). David's sin was forgiven, and he was assured he would not die because God had transferred his sins. This transfer took place in actuality centuries later, when David's "son," the Lord Jesus Christ, died on the cross of Calvary. David's sins were borne by Jesus Christ and He paid the penalty for what David had done. David would not die for his sin because Christ was destined to die, bearing the penalty for them. It is almost unanimously agreed by the Christian theologians that God has forgiven David's sin through the anticipated sacrifice of the Son of God Jesus Christ. This has always been the only and valid basis for the forgiveness of sins. Repentance is a divine action, for we cannot change human hearts; only God can. In this sense, repentance is the work of God. God uses His people, like Nathan, to confront people with their sin, encouraging the sinner to repent. Nathan was never a better friend to David than when he pointed out his sin, preparing the way for his repentance.

As

Nathan for David, the whisky priest has his own conscience to remind him of his guilt and sin, always haunting him throughout his secret religious service. Most often, the priest makes open confession whenever he is reminded of the same. In the prison-cell, the priest makes an open confession to a woman's remark about him calling him a martyr: "I tell you I am in a state of mortal sin. I have done things I couldn't talk to you about. I could only whisper them in the confessional . . . you must never think the holy martyrs are like me . . . I am a whisky priest" (PG. 127).

The third and last confrontation between the priest and the lieutenant occurs when the former is captured. The priest is the hunted man, the believer; the lieutenant is the hunter, the non-believer. Their hostility is based not merely on personalities but on ideas. Their battle is a battle for the human minds. The lieutenant is infuriated by the belief in God and the priest to him, symbolizes the strength of faith, which infects the people. But, after the capture of the only priest, whom he has been seeking so far, the Lieutenant becomes soft and kind-hearted. When the Lieutenant calls him a good man, the priest again feels guilty of his past sin: "we have to die sometime,' the Lieutenant said, 'It doesn't seem to matter so much when.' 'You're a good man. You've got nothing to be afraid of.' 'You have such odd ideas,' the Lieutenant complained" (PG. 206). Engelbert Schwarzbauer in his book, *Forgiveness of Sins in Current Catholic Practice*, writes about the forgiveness of mortal sin in the following words: "It can be forgiven only by confession to a priest, the official representative of the Church, and through the words of sacramental absolution spoken in the name of the Church. . . ."(31).

Safe across the border in the neighbouring State, the priest is moved by a sense of duty and walks back into the trap laid for him. He lays down his life for God and His beloved and accomplishes the greatest act of love. Even the fear of pain remains in the background. He feels only an immense disappointment that he is going to God "empty-handed, with nothing done at all" (PG. 210). As he was reminded of the child, the very fruit of his sin he was inspired to make another prayer for her:

> He said, 'Oh God, help her. Damn me, I deserve it, but let her live for ever'. . . He thought: This is what I should feel all the time for everyone, and he tried to turn his brain away towards the half-caste, the lieutenant, even a dentist he had once sat with for a few minutes, the child at the banana station, calling up a long succession of faces, pushing at his attention as if it were a heavy door which wouldn't budge. For those were all in danger too. He prayed, 'God help them,' but in the moment of prayer he switched back to his child . . . . (PG. 208)

As he was getting ready to suffer martyrdom, he expressed the need of last confession with real and sincere repentance and a true contrition of heart. The ending is further delayed by the lieutenant's consent to the priest's wish for a confessor; Padre Jose's hesitation, and the argument with his wife over the matter, and the conflicts with the lieutenant's desperate desire to progress to an ending: "Perhaps, my dear,' Jose said, 'it's my duty . . .' 'You aren't a priest anymore,' the woman said, 'you're my husband.'" (PG. 204). Thus the lieutenant was helpless to find another priest to fulfill his last requirement, and the priest began his general confession, as if he were at the confessional:

> He put it down again and began some kind of a general confession, speaking in a whisper. He said, 'I have committed fornication' . . . He started again, 'I have lain with a woman,' and tried to imagine the other priest asking him, 'How many times? Was she married?' 'No.' without thinking what he was doing, he took another drink of brandy. (PG. 207)

Before death, the priest becomes free from the haunting fear of death and despair and realizes the true meaning of God's love. He continued his confession with a humble and contrite heart. He did not feel humiliated at revealing his sinful heart before God and in front of the lieutenant and those people gathered round him: "After a while he began again: 'I have been drunk – I don't know how many times; there isn't a duty I haven't neglected; I have been guilty of pride, lack of charity . . . 'The words were becoming formal again, meaning nothing. He had no confessor to turn his mind away from the formula to the fact" (PG. 208). When he woke up in the morning he had a feeling of hope; but the very sight of the prison again reminds him of the tragic death he is about to face that day. Then he tries to remember the act of contrition, thus saying:

> 'O God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins . . . worthy of thy dreadful punishments' . . . He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at that moment, that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and little

> courage . . . He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted – to be a saint. (PG. 210)

The priest dies a hero and a martyr. We are told that there may be ‘a handkerchief soaked in blood’ as a relic. The boy Luis, bored by the saints’ life that his mother has been reading aloud to the family, is now converted by the death of the priest and begins to sense the cruelty of the lieutenant. At that night, wholeheartedly he admits another priest to his house. The coming of another priest may be regarded as a miracle, which ensures the whisky-priest’s sainthood. Repentance is the divine means of obtaining the forgiveness of sins and enjoying fellowship with God**.** It is clear from David’s Psalms that when he sinned and sought to conceal his sin, there was a break in his fellowship with God. David lost the joy of his salvation and the assurance of God’s presence in his life. These returned when David repented. Repentance is the expression of faith, and thus the means God has appointed for a lost sinner to receive the forgiveness of sins and assurance of eternal life, in fellowship with God. According to the *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, “Most of the latter part of David’s life was marred by dire events apparently precipitated by his adultery” (264). The prophet’s rebuke touched the heart of David; conscience was aroused; his guilt appeared in its entire enormity. His soul was bowed in penitence before God. With trembling lips he said, “I have sinned against the Lord.” All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. David had committed a grievous sin, toward both Uriah and Bathsheba, and he keenly felt this. But infinitely greater was his sin against God. Though there would be found none in Israel to execute the sentence of death upon the anointed of the Lord, David trembled, being guilty and

unforgiven, that he should be cut down by the swift judgment of God. But the message was sent to him by the prophet, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (2 Sam. 12.13). Yet justice must be maintained. The sentence of death was transferred from David to the child of his sin. Thus the king was given opportunity for repentance; while to himself, the suffering and death of the child, as a part of his punishment, was bitter than his own death could have been. The prophet said, “Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die” (2 Sam. 12.14).

Worried about the safety of Brigitta, the fruit of his sin, the priest strikes a bargain with God and enters into an “I-Thou” relationship with God: “Oh God, give me any kind of death – without contrition, in a state of sin – only save this child”(PG. 82). Like the whisky priest, David also pleads with fasting and deep humiliation for the life of his child, when his child is stricken. He put off his royal robes, he laid aside his crown, and night after night he lay upon the earth, in heartbroken grief interceding for the innocent one suffering for his guilt. Upon learning that it was dead, he quietly submitted to the decree of God. The first stroke had fallen of that punishment which he himself had declared just; but David, trusting in God’s mercy, was not without comfort. John Spurling, in his book, *Graham Greene* states: “The priest begins by feeling pity mixed with love for his illegitimate daughter; a wretched knowing urchin in one of the poor villages, and the idea grows in his mind until it adds a new dimension to his obscure sense of Christian duty” (39).

David's Psalm 51 has a great significance to any of the repenting sinner. It is one of the most forcible illustrations given us of the struggles and temptations of humanity, and of genuine repentance toward God. Through all the ages it has proved to be a source of encouragement to souls that, having fallen into sin, were struggling under the burden of their guilt. Thousands of the children of God, who have been betrayed into sin, when ready to give up to despair have remembered how David's sincere repentance and confession were accepted by God, notwithstanding the fact that he suffered for his transgression; and they also have taken courage to repent and try again to walk in the way of God's commandments. The Law of Moses has no sacrifice prescribed for sins of willfulness. There is no mask for those sins, so David asks that God might 'blot them out.' With an unclean heart he cannot go through the rituals and he says that he wants to blot it out thoroughly. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. 51.2). He feels more estranged and alienated from a God who is Holy. The primary attribute of God, as mentioned earlier is not love, grace and mercy, but it is holiness. The word of God to mankind is, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Pet. 1.16). God cannot deal with us on any other basis or yardstick than His holiness. If He is to have mercy and kindness toward David, he must first deal with His holiness. So David realizes there has to be a washing and a cleansing of him by God; "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan assured David passing on the message of God's forgiveness.

At the end of his life, David instructed Solomon on the importance of obedience to God's commandments: "And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and

his

testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and withersoever thou turnest thyself" (1 Kings. 2.3). In his old age David was faithful and dedicated to God. He always sought for the best interests of his people. As the Holy Scripture testifies:

> Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord, his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings. 15.4-5).

The life and conflicts of King David, the selected Biblical model, and the whisky priest, the fictional character and protagonist of *The Power and the Glory* are analyzed and compared in this chapter. The whisky priest, who represents the Church during the religious persecution in Mexico, suffers from loneliness and inner conflict as part of fulfilling his responsibility towards the Church and fidelity to God. In the Bible, we find that at the end of David's reign, his dream of building the Jerusalem Temple had to be fulfilled through his son, Solomon. In the novel also one may find the appearance of another young priest to the scene immediately after the martyrdom of the whisky priest, to carry on his service regarding faith. Throughout their lives, both the whisky priest and King David face internal and external struggles caught up between the two equal forces of good and evil. The present chapter has been an attempt of elaborate a comparative study of the spiritual conflicts and constant inner

struggles of both.

The lieutenant is at times portrayed sympathetically, for he is gifted with a moral character and sense of purpose traditionally associated with the priesthood. But as Maria Couto has pointed out, *The Power and the Glory* structures the conflict between social justice and faith in hostile terms: “Religion and politics, the Church and the state, are in opposite camps. The priest is a member of the establishment to be wiped out so that social justice can prevail: the lieutenant, member of another establishment, leads the crusade” (69). Greene also shows certain similarities between the whisky priest and the lieutenant, their desires for a just society, their single-mindedness and their respect for one another. The ending of the novel is rather curious that the priest is shot, and another anonymous priest replaces him.

The mental agony and the spiritual struggle David describes finally brought him to break his silence and confess his sins. David, like the prodigal son in the Holy Gospel, knew that he did not deserve God’s forgiveness or His blessings, and so he did not ask for anything. He renounced his sin forever. David manifested real repentance and was genuinely regretful and, as a result, he did not repeat the sin. The first stroke was accepted by David as penalty, which he himself had declared just and trusting in God’s mercy, he expressed: “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51.3).

This episode in David’s history is full of significance to the repenting sinner. Through all the ages it has proved a source of encouragement to souls that, having fallen into sin, were struggling under the burden of their guilt. With a contrite heart, David speaks to God asking pardon for what he has done against God and against

Israel:

“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest” (Ps. 51.4). He has total fellowship with a Holy God, but the consequences of his sin continue to work themselves out.

Greene shows a complex sense of human predicament in the life of the whisky priest. In the novel, *The Power and the Glory*, we find the selfless service, discipline, dedication, human misery, and the sense of abandonment in a Godless state etc. gathered in a single human being like the whisky priest. The priest feels the sense of abandonment in the hut, where he shelters with the mestizo, a Judas-figure. When he was arrested for possessing liquor and lived in prison, he underwent the same feeling: “In an odd way he felt abandoned because they had shown no sign of recognition**”** (PG. 136). Again the priest feels abandonment in the banana station, where a girl sheltered him; when he takes refuge with a German couple; and at the sight where the Mexican woman leaving her dead child as a useless object, at the foot of one of the crosses. He felt terribly abandoned when he was rejected to stay with Maria, the mother to his illegitimate daughter. Padre Jose’s refusal to hear his confession was another strong feeling of abandonment to the whisky priest: “His head drooped between his knees; he looked as if he had abandoned everything and been abandoned” (PG. 205). At the end the priest is totally desperate when he is trapped and captured as he tries to give the last rites to a dying American bandit. Thus the priest undergoes inner conflicts in different life situations and his suffering leads him to nothing else other than sanctification.

After his capture the whisky priest is executed and thus becomes a martyr for the Catholic Church during the religious persecution. Roger Sharrock in his book, *Saints, Sinners and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene*, speaks about the self-surrender of the priest at the end of his life: “The priest achieves moments of happiness by his total surrender to circumstances and dies with a hope of salvation only he himself fails to acknowledge. There is abandonment to the world and abandonment to the will of God” (108). Roger Sharrock reaffirms Greene’s belief: “Greene’s great double insight is into the darkness of the human heart and the mysterious freedom of God’s love to enlighten it” (122). Sainthood is the ultimate end that the priest aims at as he waits for death and he experiences “only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. . . . He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted - to be a saint” (PG. 210). Similarly, in the life of King David, we find the spiritual conflict and the agony suffered by David in order to attain real sanctification, and thus to become a saint. To make sure that Solomon would succeed to the throne, David had him publicly anointed. The last recorded words of the aged King are the words of total surrender, and a piece of advice to Solomon to be faithful to God, to reward loyal servants, and to punish the wicked. David is honoured by the Church as a saint. The words of Roger Sharrock are very relevant and appropriate here: “With the arrival of the new priest we are returned from the potential isolation of the solitary victim for whom no miracle falls to the fruitful sacrifice of the orthodox martyr which will be repeated so as to ensure the continuous and triumphal life of the Church” (118). The arrival of the new priest is an assertion of the power and the glory of the Church and

the

justification and the fulfillment of the sufferings and the death of the whisky priest.

The *Power and the Glory* is not merely a thesis novel, a saint's life, or a political tract, but it is a consistent allegory on the theme of everyman, suggests De Vitis in his observation on Greene (77). The spiritual conflicts experienced by the priest and King David indicate the conflict between good and evil and the victory of the good over evil. There are certain similarities and dissimilarities found in their lives. Since both the characters are not in the same life situations - one is fictional and the other Biblical - naturally there will be several distinctions. Yet there are a number of situations, where they are found similar in nature, like their Divine call, responsibility, personal weaknesses, nature of repentance, fidelity to God and to their official duties in spite of their personal offences and, lastly, they seem to be similar in finding their successors at the end of their life. Through these various similar and dissimilar factors, the present study has tried to articulate and draw out the turbulent spiritual conflicts of both the characters, leading them into sanctification.

CHAPTER IV

Celestial Bliss in *The End of the Affair*

> He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted - to be a saint.
>
> - Greene, *The Power and the Glory*, 210

Graham Greene's novel, *The End of the Affair* explores the theme of sin and salvation. It leads the readers into the heights of sublime level and the experience of celestial joy. The real theme of the novel is the working of Divine grace. It is set in war time and just after World War II and was first published in 1951 in England. If *The Heart of the Matter* is the last of the 'Catholic trilogy' of Greene, *The End of the Affair* marks the end of his Catholic series. The novel is a pathos-laden analysis of a three-way conflict between love of self, love of man and love of God. De Vitis in *Graham Greene*, quotes Greene's own words from the *Time* in its 29 October 1951 issue, saying,

> "I wrote a novel about a man who goes to hell - *Brighton Rock* - another about a man who goes to heaven - *The Power and the Glory*. Now I've simply written one about a man who goes to purgatory (*The Heart of the Matter*)" . . . Yet *The End of the Affair* may well be a novel about a woman who goes to heaven, for Greene is consciously, perhaps even self-consciously, working within the anatomy of sainthood. *The End of the Affair* may in fact be the most Catholic of his novels in the narrowest sense

of the definition. (93)

Greene explores the nature of sainthood and the possibility of the heroine's salvation in his novel, *The End of the Affair*. His contemporaries could relate to the setting of the story, as the war was fresh in their memories and they were living in the same postwar period as the characters. Within this setting, Greene explores the themes of love, hate, faithfulness and the presence of divinity in human lives. Critics have been generally positive in their reviews and analyses of the novel, and readers have embraced it for more than fifty years. Greene dedicated the novel describing that affair in *The End of the Affair*, "To C. with love" (C. for 'Catherine'), and shows Greene's own affair with Catherine. For *The End of the Affair*, which, he has written to Catherine Walston, Greene was awarded in New York the Catholic Authors' award for fiction. Robert Gorham Davis gives a brief sketch of the settings of Greene's novel, *The End of the Affair*: "London is bomb-damaged; it rains all the time; the heroine has a bad cough; the meals are indigestible and made to sound so; the people are boring or nerve-racking; love is described largely in physical terms, and those repellent ones. The characters turn to the Church because they find life intolerable" (60). The novel reflects Greene's childhood conviction of love and despair and his vision of the world has been as of a place of sin and suffering.

The novel , *The End of the Affair*, appears to be a confessional work of Greene. Being a Catholic convert, Greene himself violates the seventh commandment of Christ: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Mark. 10.19). During 1940s and 1950s,

even in his sinful relationship with Catherine Walston, Greene believed that God might bless their adulterous relationship. From Greene's letter to Catherine, Norman Sherry writes an extract in his biography: "I have certainly been to the Sacraments far more often in our five years than in the previous eight. So with me – as far as you are concerned – there's no real conflict, and sometimes I hate the conflict I cause in you" (Life Vol. II, 502). A reading of *The End of the Affair* will convince the reader of the inner conflict experienced by the author. Although Greene was observing some of the religious practices of a Catholic believer, he used to deny and doubt the most central doctrine of the faith. Several times he denies his Catholic belief and in his old age, his belief is almost completely weakened by skepticism and doubt. At the end of his life, just three years before his death, in 1988, Greene said: "I say my prayers. I go to Mass. I never believed in hell. There's a big question mark over heaven. I'm not an atheist, which is a form of dogma and I'm against dogma. I'm agnostic" (*Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 18).

Graham Greene is obsessed with the theme of human alienation in his novel, *The End of the Affair* and the emotions in the novel appear human. According to Frank Kermode, this novel is Greene's "masterpiece, his fullest and most completely realized book" (186). David Pryce-Jones says that in *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* Greene "expresses with a simple optimism the forlorn gropings of Scobie, Bendrix and Sarah" (89). The setting of the story develops in war-torn London, where the heroine Sarah Miles initiates an adulterous affair with the writer Maurice Bendrix, but suddenly leaves him without explanation. Later, Bendrix befriends Sarah's dull husband Henry. When Henry confides his suspicion that his

wife is cheating on him, the jealous Bendrix hires a private detective to discover why Sarah left him and who has taken his place. Tracking Sarah to a mysterious meeting with another man and gaining access to her diary, Bendrix finds that his rival is not human beings but God. Bendrix is shocked at the spiritual awakening in Sarah's life, and later on gets himself converted at the series of miracles that impact the lives of the other characters in the novel. When Sarah abandons him, for her new lover God, Bendrix takes God to be his ultimate rival, and his love turns to hatred, for Sarah and for God. Gradually, he comes to realize that his hatred is really fear of the leap into faith in God; and by the end of the novel his love for Sarah has grown beyond lust into an awareness of life after death and of the existence of God. Though it is a short novel, Greene is able to explore in it some considerable depth not only of the complexities of human emotions but also of philosophical issues relating to faith and existence of God. De Vitis also observes thus: "The central conflict of the novel is a religious one, yet the reader sees it from various angles. The devices - flashback, diary, reverie, letters - all throw light on a spiritual struggle" (98).

This story has conspicuously semi-autobiographical overtones. Greene, a Catholic who pondered the relationship between adultery and religious belief, wrote a series of novels concerning God, faith, and human and divine love. This one is the climax of that series, where God takes an active role in people's lives. It has also been assumed that the illicit affair between Bendrix and Sarah was reproduced after one of Greene's own wartime love affairs. There are some interesting assumptions about the nature of love and hate in the novel. The story is told by Bendrix, the hero himself.

The affair between himself and Sarah abruptly ends leaving Bendrix alone. He feels jealous and unhappy. After a lapse of two years Bendrix meets Henry, who has been betrayed by Sarah. Bendrix is torn between love and hate. Sarah's personality is a conflicting blend of saintliness and indifference.

This short book seems to continue beyond the logical ending point, and one may be impelled to be interested in the story ending than in the end of the affair itself in order to find the real faith and the nature of God. The passion that begins their love affair is later replaced by pure divine love. She is painfully aware of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. Sarah soon realizes the trials and torments of the life she has chosen, but by choosing it she has turned away from the hollowness and transience of human, sexual, love in great and superior preference to divine love. She is so much troubled and goes to a church where she has been enlightened and motivated that she cannot have both God and Bendrix. Finally she submits herself to God. Dr. Padmaker Mishra observes how Sarah offers her life to God: "She comes to understand God's love, which had taken away her disbelief and hate. She is also able to understand God's mercy . . ." (143) Cedric Watts stamps this novel as the one "which boldly recruited God as a miracle-working character" (52). He also evaluates the novel:

> The novel's suggestion that adultery may lead, via a bargain with God, to sainthood . . . But never before had Greene written a novel in which God intervened so directly and manifestly in the arrangement of events. Even a believer . . . depend on supernatural intervention. Bendrix's life saved by Sarah's wager with God, Smythe's strawberry-mark cured by her kiss,

> Bendrix rescued by the dead Sarah from fornication with Sylvia Black, Parkis' boy healed by Sarah's ministry: it's a long list, and the supernatural aura is strengthened by a number of dreams by which Sarah appears to be communicating consolingly from heaven to earth. (60-62)

Greene later realizes the absurdity he has incorporated in the novel about the series of miracles in her life and after her death and tries to convey the insignificance of the miracles through the explanations of Bendrix, "I've read somewhere that urticaria is hysterical in origin" (EA. 158). The Divine intervention and working of Divine grace in the characters of *The End of the Affair* is reflected in the words of Frank Kermode, "The unwilling sanctification of Sarah is a difficult theme . . . God's perversity and skill are remembered even by Sarah, who takes the deforming strawberry mark as His image, and remembers how unfairly He used Bendrix to His own ends" (186).

This chapter attempts the character analysis of Sarah and the anonymous 'sinful woman' in the Bible, with a parallel study on the theme of suffering and sanctity. We find the 'sinful woman' in the Holy Bible, enjoying inner peace and joy at the feet of Jesus, while washing Jesus' feet with her tears. The story of this 'sinful woman' is taken from the Gospel according to St. Luke (Chapter 7. 36-50). Jesus is invited for dinner by Simon, one of the Pharisees, in order to honour Him as He is the famous rabbi. The 'sinful woman' has heard that Jesus will be there, and brings an alabaster jar of perfume. She stands behind him weeping, then kneels down and begins to wet his feet with her tears. She wipes his feet with her hair, kisses them and pours perfume on them. Next, she begins to kiss his feet. Jesus turns the object from love to

forgiveness and declares that her many sins are forgiven for she loves much. But, the woman's sins are actually forgiven even before she comes to Simon's house, and she comes with perfume, weeps, and kisses Jesus' feet, because she has already been forgiven and has acquired real faith in God. She comes again because she knows well that she is forgiven; and wants to express her gratitude. Peter Milward's observation on good and evil from his book, *Christian Themes in English Literature*, is very relevant to this chapter: "For without evil there would be no occasion for the practice of certain virtues, such as patience and forgiveness; and it is against its dark background that the light of goodness shines out with more splendour" (45).

Isn't this Biblical episode a love story, pure and simple, where the readers may presume a love much deeper and heart-felt than the one infused with physical desire? It should be noted that the passage we are studying in Luke chapter 7, is similar to other episodes of Jesus being anointed by a woman, depicted in Matthew chapter 26, Mark chapter 14 and John chapter 12 and are often confused with the selected incident. So if we are to understand the story of Jesus anointed by a 'sinful woman', we need to separate it from the story of Jesus' anointing at Bethany near the end of his ministry. The two events are confused easily enough because of several similarities: Jesus is anointed with expensive perfume; He is anointed by a woman; and the anointing takes place in the house of a man named Simon.

But the differences between the stories show that our Gospel passage in Luke. 7.36-50 is really a different incident from that of Matthew 26.6-13; Mark. 14.1-11 and John. 12.1-10. 'The anointing at Bethany' differs in various ways: It takes place at the home of Simon the Leper, not Simon the Pharisee; The woman doing the anointing at

Bethany is not spoken of as sinful, but actually appears to be Mary, Lazarus' sister. The meaning of the anointing at Bethany is to prefigure Jesus' burial; The anointing is on the head in Matthew and Mark, and the feet in John. As a result of the confusion, Mary the sister of Lazarus is thought to be the 'sinful woman', but that is not at all how she is depicted in the other Gospels. As we study Jesus' anointing by the 'sinful woman' in Luke, we reach a story of contrasts: the self-righteous Pharisee and a 'sinful woman'; formal hospitality and overflowing love; self-worth through righteous living and self-worth through forgiveness. The criticism by disciples, especially Judas, is over the value of the perfume that is 'wasted', rather than as the criticism of the morals of the woman doing the anointing.

Jesus is invited for dinner by one of the Pharisees, though presumably it is in Galilee where other events in this section take place. Invitation to dinner certainly implies respect for Jesus, the new teacher and healer. Simon wanted to learn more about Jesus, but we can't consider him as a believer, rather as a skeptic, and he wanted to have the honor of hosting this famous rabbi. We can assume that Simon is well-to-do as most of the Pharisees seemed to be. Hospitality is a very strong value in the Near East, with much fuss made over guests. For example, a basin would be provided so that guests could wash the dust of the road from their feet. Scented olive oil was sometimes offered to anoint a guest's hair as in Psalm 23.5b - "thou anointest my head with oil"; and in Ps. 92.10 - "I shall be anointed with fresh oil". And the beloved guests would be kissed when they were greeted, as mentioned in 2 Samuel 15.5 - "he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him"; 2 Samuel 19.39 - "And when the

King was come over, the King kissed Bar-zil'la-i, and blessed him"; and in Matthew 26.49 - "he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him". We observe that Simon offers none of these symbols of a sociable host. Even without receiving any formal hospitality, Jesus accepts the dinner invitation. And instead of Simon, the 'sinful woman' washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, poured perfume on his feet and kissed them.

One may find the real sense of sinner-saint paradox, through the mysterious life of Sarah Miles, the heroine of *The End of the Affair*. Ever since her prayer is answered and Bendrix recovers, Sarah is in a mental conflict in her attempt to resist her lover. At last, she gives herself to God and believes. God reaches out to Sarah in her sinful state and she surrenders herself to God. Bendrix realizes that Sarah breaks off her love-affair with him and avoids him for the sake of her private vow with God. Instead, she feels a sublime love for Bendrix. The affair ends on Bendrix's realization that Sarah's lover was God and it is exposed only after her death through a series of miracles establishing her sainthood. Bendrix begins to believe in God and get an awareness of God's existence.

As Sarah renounces the worldly pleasures once and forever, the sinful woman also enjoys Celestial joy at the feet of God, after undergoing the process of sanctification at the end of her life. The central character of the novel is a married woman, Sarah Miles, the wife of a civil servant, Henry Miles. She has an adulterous love affair with a middle-aged novelist Maurice Bendrix. The lovers meet at a party thrown by Sarah's dreary civil-servant husband, and proceed to liberate each other from boredom and routine unhappiness. From the very beginning of the affair itself,

Bendrix has foreboding fears that their affair will end one day: “I had come into this affair with my eyes open, knowing that one day this must end . . .” (EA. 44). Bendrix hates Henry, her husband as his rival and even hates Sarah for her capacity for ending the affair. Indeed, the affair goes on unchecked for several years until, during an afternoon meeting, Bendrix goes downstairs to look for intruders in his basement and a bomb falls on the building. Sarah rushes down to find him lying under a fallen door, and immediately makes a promise with God, whom she has never particularly cared for: “I love him and I’ll do anything if you’ll make him alive . . . I’ll give him up forever, only let him be alive with a chance . . . People can love without seeing each other, can’t they, they love You all their lives without seeing You” (EA. 76). She loves Bendrix passionately but when he is knocked out by a bomb-blast, she is ready to give up her physical lust for Bendrix, if God brings him back to life. Her prayer is answered and Bendrix recovers.

Ever since, Sarah is in a mental conflict in her attempt to resist her lover. She leaves for another place to forget him. She even consoles herself that the oath is not valid, for it has been made to a God, who does not exist after all. At last she goes to an atheist preacher, Richard Smythe for a rational explanation. Smythe, in turn, falls in love with her. Realizing that both Henry and Bendrix are losing Sarah, Bendrix employs a private detective, Mr. Parkis. Bendrix is agitated over Sarah’s going out of his life and so he assumes the existence of another lover. With the war and the affair over, Maurice Bendrix seeks an explanation of why his lover, Sarah Miles, broke off their relationship so abruptly. When he sees her again after two years he becomes

obsessed with jealousy and a strong desire to be with her again. He hires a private detective to follow Sarah because he believes that she is having an affair with another man. But she is in great mental anguish, for she is unable to make a strong decision. Graham Greene does a great job of describing Sarah's anguish as she goes through a crisis of conscience in search of God and the selfishness of Maurice who only cares for himself. This is a story of love under difficult circumstances. According to Paul O' Prey, Sarah's capacity to love God proceeds from her love of Bendrix. Greene believes that the experience of physical love leads one to salvation, as observed in the case of Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*. In *The End of the Affair*, as Paul O' Prey comments, "it becomes one of the main themes. It is through human, carnal love that Sarah comes to experience Divine love, which is why Sarah can only believe in a physical, material God, who is portrayed as a divine lover, as Bendrix's rival for Sarah's heart" (92).

As Bendrix arranges a private spy on Sarah he comes into possession of her diary, from where he learns that she still loves him. In her diary Sarah had recorded the inner conflict that was being undergone by her, ever since the unpleasant episode. She had written about the incident when during an air-raid, he was knocked down unconscious and Sarah had presumed him dead. Having believed him killed in the war-time bombing, she had prayed and promised to God to save his life at the very cost of her love for him. In *The End of the Affair* one can find the exalted nature of self-sacrifice of Sarah, a sinful woman and the nature of mercy of God and the miraculous Divine intervention. In the entry dated 17 June 1944, Sarah had written thus:

I knelt down on the floor: I was mad to do such a thing: I never even had to

> do it as a child - my parents never believed in prayer, any more than I do. I hadn't any idea what to say. Maurice was dead. Extinct . . . I knelt and put my head on the bed and wished I could believe. Dear God, I said - why dear, why dear? - make me believe . . . I can't do anything myself. . . . I love him and I'll do anything if You'll make him alive, I said very slowly, I'll give him up forever, only let him be alive with a chance . . . . (EA. 76)

At last, she gives herself up to God and believes. God reaches out to Sarah in her lust and she immediately surrenders herself to God. In the same way, the sinful woman in the Holy Bible gives herself up to Jesus as she kneels down at the feet of Jesus. William Barclay, one of the famous Bible critics has certain observations regarding the sinful woman's action of kneeling down at the feet of Jesus:

> It was the custom that when a Rabbi was at a meal in such a house, all kinds of people came in - they were quite free to do so - to listen to the pearls of wisdom which fell from his lips . . . In the east the guests did not sit, but reclined, at table. They lay on low couches, resting on the left elbow, leaving the right arm free, with the feet stretched out behind and during the meal the sandals were taken off. That explains how the woman was standing beside Jesus' feet. (94)

Simon does not seem shocked that such a woman is in his house, and Jesus doesn't identify what kind of woman she is. In their culture, it seems that anyone was free to attend and listen to the dinner conversation. This sinful woman is not late to the dinner

party. She has heard that Jesus will be there, and gets to the house even before his arrival. She wants to see Jesus again. And so, she is waiting with the others when he comes. ". . . brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment" (Luke. 7.37-38). Early in the meal there is no focus on the woman. Simon may feel uncomfortable about her being there, but he does not exclude her from his home. That would have caused an ugly scene. So he allows her to remain. But the focus is clearly on Jesus and his words as he shares the meal. William Barclay also observes thus:

> The woman was a . . . prostitute. No doubt she had listened to Jesus . . . had glimpsed in him the hand which could lift her from the mire of her ways. Round her neck she wore, like all Jewish women, a little phial of concentrated perfume; they were called alabasters; and they were very costly. She wished to pour it on his feet, for it was all she had to offer. But as she saw him, the tears came and fell upon his feet. For a Jewish woman to appear with hair unbound was an act of the gravest immodesty. On her wedding day a girl bound up her hair and never would she appear with it unbound again. The fact that this woman loosed her long hair in public showed how she had forgotten everyone except Jesus. (95)

The woman is standing behind Jesus, and we read that her tears fall upon Jesus' feet. How long this goes on we are not told. Each drop makes a brown wet mark in the dust on his feet, until his feet are wet with her tears. She loosens her hair and begins to wipe his feet with her hair. To go about in public with her hair down was considered a

shameful thing to do, yet she is not frightened. Next, she begins to kiss his feet and pours scented oil on his feet.

Sarah, in *The End of the Affair*, is sitting in the corner of the Church, enjoying the blissful presence of Jesus, and thus experiences inner peace and joy. At present, she is at the feet of Jesus, pouring out all her sinful past before him, renewing the vow she has once taken by renouncing worldly pleasures once and forever. Bendrix had been searching for her for the past two years. To his surprise, Bendrix's most recent rival is not Smythe but the invisible God, into whose trap, Sarah has fallen. Bendrix realizes that Sarah had struck a sort of bargain with God for his sake. She breaks off her love-affair with Bendrix and avoids him for the sake of her private vow and shrinks from all men. She feels a sublime love for all of them. Bendrix experiences more jealousy than her husband. Even Greene cannot imagine how such a sinful woman falls in love with God. Padmaker Mishra, in his evaluation on Greene as a philosopher and thriller-writer states that, "In *The End of the Affair*, Greene's concern is to show the possibility of a person's redemption through love and suffering. Sarah Miles is led from sexuality through renunciation to sanctification" (30).

Likewise, the 'sinful woman' in the Holy Bible, is also led from her sinful ways to Jesus' blissful presence at Simon's house. It is sure that once the bottle of perfume is opened, immediately it is noticed by everyone in the house. While Jesus has been the centre of focus up to now, all eyes turn to the woman, kneeling at Jesus' feet, weeping, wiping, caressing his feet with her long black hair, kissing his feet with her lips, and pouring perfume upon them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw

this, he said to himself, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him; for she is a sinner” (Luke. 7.39). Simon acknowledges Jesus as a teacher, but he doubts whether He is a prophet as some people claim. He judges both the sinful woman and Jesus, and is wrong in both his judgments. It is interesting that he does not condemn the action of touching, but only Jesus’ lack of discernment of the one who was touching him and her sinful history. As Simon the Pharisee doubts whether Jesus is a prophet and worries about His capacity to discern the character of the woman, *The New Interpreter’s Bible:* Vol. IX asserts, “Jesus’ response shows that he knows both Simon’s thoughts and the character of the woman. His response, therefore, confirms that he is a prophet; but when he forgives the woman’s sins, he is greater than a prophet” (169).

But Jesus does not let Simon’s judgment go unchallenged, even his silent judgment. Jesus is probably seated at the place of honour to the right of the host, so Jesus turns to Simon at his left and begins to tell a parable, to clarify his doubts regarding Jesus’ actions:

> There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. (Luke. 7.41-43)

Simon has been trapped by Jesus. Instead of judging the woman, Jesus lets Simon make the judgement himself. Then he said to Simon:

> I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she

> hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. (Luke. 7.44-46)

Jesus compares Simon's acts as a host to the sinful woman's acts of love. Simon's actions have shown little love, while the sinful woman has lavished love upon Jesus. With the narrative effect of the parable, Jesus judges Simon's actions and transforms the sinner into a saint through forgiveness and love. "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little" (Luke. 7.47).

On the contrary, one finds Sarah's renunciation of Bendrix as an expression of her love for him rather than of her belief in God. Her diary expresses her love and raises doubts against God in terms of both human and spiritual love. Thus it is suggested that the nature of Sarah's commitment is not the result of true love towards God, but because Bendrix's life seems to depend on her word. Maria Couta is of the view that Sarah partially believes in God as she experiences the miraculous intervention of God in the life of Bendrix: "The intensity of Sarah's love and her passionate struggle to protect Bendrix by depriving herself of the comfort of his love evoke the religious sense. It is relevant to ask why Sarah should take her vow so seriously when she is not a specifically religious person" (83). Sarah undergoes spiritual conflict and it is obvious as she expresses the uniqueness of the divine love: "We can love with our minds, but can we love only with our minds? Love extends

itself all the time . . . Could anybody love God or hate him if he hadn't got a body?" (EA. 88-89).

Unlike Sarah's love and commitment, the sinful woman has an ardent desire to be with Jesus and experience the forgiving love and mercy of Jesus. To make Simon and the others understand her actions, Jesus first tells a story about forgiveness, and then uses the story to interpret the woman's devotion in terms of forgiveness of sin. But Simon is quite indifferent to the situation. Why should he need forgiveness anyway? He isn't a sinner! "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meal with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke. 7.48-50). It is observed and acknowledged that the woman's sins are actually forgiven even before she comes to Simon's house, and at this point Jesus only pronounces them forgiven. I believe, she comes with perfume, and weeps, and kisses Jesus' feet, because she has already been forgiven and reached out in real faith in God that he offers in his teaching. She comes again because she knows well that she is forgiven and wants to express her gratitude and love. That conforms well to Jesus' explanation of her actions. The guests, however, do not understand. They think that he is absolving her sins then and there and that troubles them because only God could forgive sins.

But Jesus looking directly at the woman acknowledges that her faith in his promise has brought her salvation. And he offers her the blessing that Jews offer one another in parting, 'Shalom', which means not only inner peace that has flooded this prostitute's soul, but also prosperity, goodness and the divine blessing. Jesus has welcomed her back into the fellowship and salvation of God's chosen people. She

then

appears to be exultant and elated. The tears are still flowing, but flowing through the beauty and glory of the countenance of the one forever changed, totally transformed and loved. She is often reminded of the Divine master's promising words: "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke. 7.50). It is significant to note the study of William Barclay on this context:

> The story demonstrates a contrast between two attitudes of mind and heart. Firstly, Simon was conscious of no need and therefore felt no love, and so received no forgiveness. Simon's impression of himself was that he was a good man in the sight of men and of God. Secondly, the woman was . . . overwhelmed with love for him who could supply it, and so received forgiveness. (95)

One finds the miraculous intervention of the divine presence in the life of a sinner to bring about total transformation in her sinful life. Since this divine experience of forgiveness, she has become another individual and takes up a decision to follow Jesus, the Savior of her life. Here, it is seen that the fictional character Sarah Miles realizes that God is so compassionate and capable of saving Bendrix even in his sinfulness.

Being convinced of a miracle that Bendrix's recovery of his senses soon after her prayer, Sarah fulfils her promise given to God, and moves towards a firmer belief in God. Sarah's promise makes her start on the ascent to sanctity. Thus says De Vitis regarding Sarah's belief in God: "In the early stages of her spiritual awareness Sarah feels that she doesn't believe in God. But she does believe . . . Sarah knows that God

exists . . . The alternating spasms of love and hatred that she feels for both God and Bendrix eventually bring her to an understanding of spiritual love" (102). Sarah confesses that her love for Bendrix was only an introduction to the glorious love she feels for God: "Did I ever love Maurice as much before I loved You? Or was it really You I loved all the time? Did I touch You when I touched him? . . . " (EA. 99). In Morris L. West's *The Devil's Advocate*, Sarah's belief in the presence of God in their relationship is described clearly: "God seems to have been an unseen presence, the third Man, in their lives. Sarah feels that in loving Bendrix she has loved God all the time and that the act of love has always implied an act of faith" (274).

Bendrix is a non-believer, and tries to persuade Sarah to return to him. She is compelled to go out into the rain to avoid Bendrix. She was already keeping poor health and the strain and exposure prove too much for her. Still torn between human love and her supernatural commitment, she develops pneumonia. Two years of her extreme mental anguish end up in this short illness, which she refuses to treat, and she dies soon. The affair ends on Bendrix's realization that Sarah's lover was no human but God. It is interesting to note Sarah's progression to sainthood. Sarah takes much effort to express her divine love. At the end of her life, somehow she triumphs over her human weaknesses. She renounces her human love and tries to grow in the love of God by accepting sacrifices and sufferings. Kulshrestha comments, "as a consequence of her vow, Sarah's is being lacerated by the conflict between ordinary corrupt human love and faith which she has caught like a disease. It is the conflict between the flesh and the spirit which is experienced by those who renounce one for the other" (120). Very much like St. John of the Cross, Sarah undergoes her spiritual journey through

the dark night as it is described by St. John in *The Ascent of Mt. Carmel*:

> Through the life of faith, hope and charity the soul uproots every ungodly thing and unites itself to God, all of which would be wholly impossible without these virtues . . . the beginner must also live by faith in the active night of the senses, and in fact, that part dealing with the journey in faith has many references relating to the active purification of the senses (53).

Sarah is fully aware of the desert experience she has to undergo after the renunciation of the worldly love. She begins to experience the journey of the soul through the dark night, where she sees herself alone in the dark desert and feels terrible insecurity.

According to Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, Greene is convinced that the fundamental paradox of Christianity lies in the co-existence of good and evil: “The temptation in the wilderness has a Sacramental value for man . . . Sarah Miles herself in *The End of the Affair* would meet with her God in the desert which she vainly tried to fill with her love for Bendrix. Thus God breaks the heart of man; for the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” (98). Here Sarah is determined to fulfill her vow with the only hope that God will fill the empty desert and she expresses her belief in God’s love in spite of the desert experience. In *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Book II, Chap. 6. 4, St. John speaks of the soul entering a period of purgation: “for the sensory part is purified by aridity, the faculties by the void of their apprehensions and the spirit by thick darkness” (CW. 339). Here one finds the same inner struggle between human love and Divine love, that Sarah undergoes herself as part of purification. St. Augustine in *The Confessions*,

speaks of the struggle between “the chaste dignity of Continence and the toys of toys and vanities of vanities . . . those ancient favourites of mine” (214-15).

The real version is exposed only after Sarah’s death, through a series of miracles: The private detective Parkis’ little son, who uses Sarah’s school books, gets miraculously cured of his appendicitis. Smythe’s strawberry patch on his cheek has disappeared. Bendrix begins to believe in God and gets an awareness of God’s existence. Thus God, like a triumphant conqueror, works through Sarah. These amazing healings, taken with Mrs. Bertram’s disclosure at Sarah’s funeral that Sarah had been baptized a Catholic at the age of two, gives a hint at Sarah’s sanctity: “ Sarah was just over two . . . I left Sarah by the door and went to find the priest . . . Baptized her a Catholic” (EA. 135-6). Greene claims to have such a story of salvation only because of Sarah’s Baptism as a child, unknown even to herself.

Critics consider *The End of the Affair* as the last in Greene’s Catholic novels. In the first three books of the four, *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, and *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene depicts God as a source of grace in people’s spiritual lives, but in *The End of the Affair*, Greene presents a more active, involved God who is a force in people’s earthly lives performing miracles through Sarah. All four novels address the ideas of mortal sin and redemption. To many critics, *The End of the Affair* is the most obviously Catholic of Greene’s novels, due to the apparent sainthood of the heroine, whose death is followed by a series of miracles. According to S. K. Sharma, Greene does not aim at the sanctification of Sarah and he has written thus in his book, *Graham Greene: The Search for Belief*: “Greene certainly does not aim at edification because he leaves the question of Sarah’s sainthood wide open and seems

to be

wondering with Bendrix whether God played a role in Sarah's leap to faith" (127). K. S. Subramaniam is strong in his conviction:

> In *The End of the Affair,* passion struggles with faith. Sarah, who writes, "I have caught belief like a disease", is drawn to God against her will . . . The world is evil, but God's grace operates in strange and mysterious ways to draw people away from evil. It thrusts martyrdom upon a mean and cowardly whisky-priest and draws even a passionate woman like Sarah Miles towards God against her will. (34)

According to Maurice Bendrix the novel is a record of hate far more than of love and it is a strange hate indeed that forces him to put aside the fair account of his adulterous affair with Sarah Miles. At the beginning of the affair, Bendrix believes that he hates Sarah and her husband, Henry. By the end of the book, Bendrix's hatred has shifted to God, who has broken his life but whose existence he has at last come to recognize. De Vitis here unravels Bendrix's hatred towards God:

> Bendrix discovers that the third corner of the spiritual triangle is God; he had been the silent witness to all their acts of sex and had intervened to claim Sarah for his own. God had accepted her promise and had taken Sarah at her word . . . Once Bendrix learns of Sarah's love for God, he transfers to him the hatred he has felt for Sarah. But he had hated her only because he loved her. Now, with all the strength of his love, he hates God, his rival. (102)

Bendrix has clearly expressed his view on Sarah's sanctity in the novel. He is irritated

by Father Crompton's complacent assertion that Sarah was a good woman. After the death of Sarah, Bendrix expresses his hatred towards God: "You've taken her, but You haven't got me yet. I know Your cunning. It's You who take us up to a high place and offer us the whole universe. You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap. But I don't want Your peace and I don't want your love . . . I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed" (EA. 159). Thus Greene depicts Bendrix's reaction to Sarah's leap and his irritation to her sainthood. Similarly, in the Bible, one may observe certain unbreakable traditions of the Jews and their reaction when it is broken by Jesus especially, in the case of this sinful woman.

The gentle approach of Jesus to the sinner is nowhere more beautiful than when he meets this immoral woman. We have seen that the Jewish male still to this day gives thanks to God that he did not make him a gentile, a slave or a woman. The woman has to content herself with the more humble prayer of thanks that God has made her according to his will. A devout Jew was even forbidden to speak in the street to his own wife, nor could he be alone in an inn with a strange woman or even his own daughter. In the case of divorce, only the man was allowed to write a bill of separation to his wife.

In this episode, readers may raise certain speculative doubts like, how is the expression on Simon the Pharisee's face when he notices the woman touching Jesus' feet? What is the sinful woman's motive for coming to see Jesus? Why does Jesus let her continue, since by all appearances her action is scandalous? Is your love for the Lord more like the sinful woman's or Simon's? It is quite interesting to note how Jesus encounters a sinful woman. There is something revolutionary in the way Jesus

acted. The Pharisees and teachers of the law say; ‘This man welcomes sinners’, and others call him; ‘the guest of a sinner’. He is even called ‘a friend of sinners’. It is true that the learned Jews often direct the sinners for their repentance, but both Pharisees and teachers of the law avoid all social contact with them. Jesus, on the other hand, puts himself alongside the sinners. Donald Senior comments: “The taboos of ritual purity in the Jewish Law for touching a woman in public or associating with one who is sick further isolated them. Several times in Luke, Jesus cuts through this thicket, often provoking the anger of the guardians of the boundaries” (26).

The actions of the sinful woman are described as enabling the invisible to become visible, for the humanity to understand the true nature of its Savior; because the eye of man cannot see Him as God. The feet which she bathes with her tears are the symbol of his incarnation and the relationship established between her and Jesus through this very human action gives her proof that He is truly man. The mixture of human need and divine gift is brought out vividly here as His human body was washed by her tears and was refreshed, his divinity granted redemption for the price of her tears. The woman’s faith, love and regret are often the focus in this text. The emphasis on her mourning for sin shows her grieving contrition with the involvement of her heart, and the quality of the emotion she experiences, which brings her back to God. Her outpouring of tears is described, as abundant tears pouring from her heart revealing the never ending regret in her soul.

As Bendrix is not dead, but merely unconscious, Sarah must keep her promise. According to K. S. Subramaniam, “At the end of Sarah’s prayer Bendrix comes to her

alive. But Sarah has to desert him for God and bear the pangs of separation from her lover. This leads her towards faith in God and her sanctification later on" (36). She breaks off the relationship without giving a reason, leaving Bendrix mystified and angry. The only explanation he can think of is that she has left him for another man. It is not so until years later, when he hires a private detective to ascertain the truth, that he learns of her impassioned vow for the sake of himself. Sarah herself comes to understand her move through a strange excuse. Dr. Padmaker Mishra is of the view that Sarah has undergone a prolonged atonement: "Like Scobie and the whisky priest, she is always seized with a deep sense of human affliction. In the beginning, there is indeed nothing saintly about her. But her suffering, inner conflict and self-sacrifice confer beatitude on her" (144).

Writing to God in her journal, Sarah says: "You willed our separation, but he willed it too. He worked for it with his anger and his jealousy, and he worked for it with his love. For he gave me so much love, and I gave him so much love that soon there wasn't anything left, when we'd finished, but You" (EA.. 99). It is as though the pull towards faith were inevitable, if mysterious - perhaps as punishment for her sin of adultery. In her final years, Sarah's faith only deepens, even as she remains haunted by the bombing and the power of her own attraction to God. Gangeshwar Rai, in his book, *Graham Greene: An Existential Approach,* states thus: "Gripped with the absurd dread of the unknown and the feeling of loneliness, emptiness and desolation, Sarah longs to believe in some kind of a God . . . something vague, amorphous, cosmic . . . stretching out of the vague into the concrete human life, like a powerful vapour" (109).

Abandoning his art and being unable to respond to other women, Bendrix becomes obsessed with the desire to hurt Sarah and wreck her marriage with the dull but needy Henry. Right after World War II, Henry's declaration that his wife may be having a second affair excites Bendrix because it finally provides both the reason for her withdrawal and a chance to enact his hatred. But it turns out that Sarah's latest lover is God, who apparently raised Bendrix from the dead during an air raid after Sarah promised to renounce the romance. This miracle has deepened and revealed Sarah's secret spirituality and, even as her own health deteriorates due to pneumonia, she starts to display a saint's ability to heal others. The atheistic Bendrix becomes totally confused. How do you compete with a rival in whose existence you don't believe? By the time Sarah dies, Bendrix has become a better and a worse man. He has learned compassion for humanity in general and for Henry in particular. But Bendrix also has been emotionally exhausted and can only pray at the end of the story, to a God in whom he now doubtfully believes but certainly does not love, "O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough. I'm too tired and old to learn to love, leave me alone for ever" (EA. 160).

Bendrix reacts against God because he believes that God has taken Sarah away from him for ever and it is none but God who brings to an end to their love-affair. According to De Vitis,

> God had accepted Sarah's promise and had taken her at her word. He makes her believe, for Sarah chooses heaven as surely as Pinkie Brown in *Brighton Rock* chooses hell. Once Bendrix learns of Sarah's love for God,

> he transfers to him the hatred he has felt for Sarah. But he had hated her only because he loved her. Now, with all the strength of his love, he hates God, his rival. (102)

But Sarah determines herself to fulfill the promise she has taken for the sake of Bendrix. Sarah decides to renounce her love-affair with Bendrix and to lead a life with God in atonement for her sinful life. As Sarah comes to the realization of God's love and mercy, in self-surrender she finds, like St Augustine, the "way which leadeth not only towards the discovering but also to the inhabiting of that country where alone is true blessedness" (189). Sarah becomes like the poor widow of the Bible, offers everything to God, without keeping anything for the future. She has little to offer God, but she offers all that she has:

> And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had. (Luke. 21.1-4)

Sarah's love is proved selfless and sincere, that her prayer is answered by God in a miraculous way. Robert Hoskins observes the nature of human love in the novel as the diary focuses attention on the central contrast between two kinds of human love:

> Bendrix's is imperfect, marred by jealousy, mistrust, possessiveness, all signs of egotism and self-love; Sarah's approaches perfection, through her

> complete unselfishness. She values his happiness more than her own; her prayer for him long after their separation . . . performs the imitation of Christ through the self-sacrifice of love, and in so doing reveals Sarah's progress toward the saintliness the novel will attribute to her. (151)

Sarah's conversion to saintliness is explicit from her initial leap of faith, as she calls upon God for the rebirth of Bendrix, promising herself to God in return. And her prayer to God reflects her selfless love for Bendrix: "Give him my peace – he needs it more" (EA. 99)

In the Holy Bible, one may find 'the sinful woman' apologizing to Jesus for her offences and surrendering herself to Him. The story of the anointing reinforces the mourning for sin in the context of God's desire to reconcile humanity with Himself. The intimacy in the encounter between Jesus and the sinful woman brings out the relationship between human sin and the sufferings of Christ. In this sinful humanity, this woman is to be identified with all the people. The love expressed by her for Jesus, and his loving response, serve as the model for Christian discipleship, rather than the uprightness of the Pharisee. Jesus brings out the faith of this woman but exposes the evil thoughts of Simon with a rebuke. Jesus is a physician to her who heals the wounds of her soul. The grief which accompanies the woman's actions is used by Jesus to heal her particular wound of sin; and she, in return, offers her tears to her Physician. Jesus clears her stains by her tears; heals her wounds by her kisses; and by her ointment makes her evil name sweet as the odour of the perfume. Her body

becomes the sacrifice of “a broken and a contrite heart” (Ps. 51.17). It is the woman’s initiative which makes possible the gracious act of forgiveness; through washing she is washed, and in washing something pure, she is herself purified. In other words, the woman has within her the source of her own healing. Her insight enables her to present herself to the physician as the gift which He calls secretly. Her repentance leads her to both grief at her sins, and the confidence that she is worthy of forgiveness and that Jesus has the power to effect this renewal. The forgiveness shown to the sinful woman is thus linked with the manifestation of God’s divinity through the person of Jesus Christ. G.B. Caird, in *The Gospel of St. Luke*, pictures the woman with magnificent gesture of gratitude:

> Now she came to make a magnificent gesture of gratitude; but tears came before she could get the stopper out of her bottle of perfume, and forgetting that this was something a decent woman never did in public, she let her hair down to wipe them away . . . all that he needed to know about the uninvited guest he could read in the mirror of Simon’s shocked face, and all he needed to do for the woman he could do by accepting motionless the homage of her penitent love. (114)

Jesus sends the woman on her way with a blessing. That blessing speaks of her faith that has saved her, while the story until then has spoken only of her love and of the release of her sins declared by Jesus. G.B. Caird also asserts that it “doesn’t mean that she has earned her forgiveness by her love; it was her faith, not her love, that saved her. Her love was not the ground of a pardon she had come to seek, but the proof of a pardon she had come to acknowledge” (115). In *The End of the Affair*, Bendrix’s life

is

regained only because of Sarah's deep faith in God. Sarah gets herself sanctified; for she confesses her belief in God and fulfills her promise by renouncing all the worldly pleasures for the sake of God. The 'sinful woman' also acknowledges her deep faith in Jesus by surrendering herself to God.

As the novel unfolds, it is assured that the explanations on Bendrix's view of Sarah and of their affair will be revealed in her diary effectively. The most shocking illustration of this involves the night in June 1944 when a bomb blast traps Bendrix underneath a door and Sarah believes him to be dead. Bendrix, in recalling the events, is unaware of the vow that she has taken to give up the relationship if he should somehow survive, and interprets her actions in a mistaken manner:

> I went upstairs . . . I could see Sarah: she had got off the bed and was crouched on the floor – from fear, I supposed . . . She turned quickly and stared at me with fear. I hadn't realized that my dressing-gown was torn and dusted all over with plaster; my hair was white with it, and there was blood on my mouth and cheeks. (EA. 56-57)

Sarah's moving account of her desperate emotional state upon seeing him beneath the door, and the subsequent promise she makes to God, establishes itself as authoritative. Ironically it is Bendrix who at the time agrees to this concept like a detective story reader who is now in possession of the truth: "Now I knew the whole absurd story of the vow, now I was certain of her love, I was assured of her . . . I could have waited years now that I knew the end of story" (EA. 104). He is quite willing to reinterpret and put an end to his past feelings and suspicions and admit his mistakes in the light

of present evidence: “This is where we begin again,’ I said. ‘I’ve been a bad lover, Sarah. It was the insecurity that did it. I didn’t trust you. I didn’t know enough about you. But I’m secure now” (EA. 105). It would seem that his discovery of the diary has solved the dilemma, made whole the fragmented picture. There are two related implications that arise from this: one is that the text will subvert Bendrix’s belief that he has resolved the mystery, and expose his shallow end-expectations; as he is wearily forced to admit after Sarah’s death, “nothing in life now ever seems to end” (EA. 121).

In *An Existential Approach*, Gangeshwar Rai expresses Bendrix’s hatred for God reflecting his own tormented mind: “In spite of his combat with his rival and firm determination not to surrender himself to Him, he is afraid that his hatred may turn into belief which will be a triumph for God” (55). But he also emphasizes the fickle minded nature of Bendrix: “Bendrix’s feeling of anxiety leads him to believe in the existence of God, though he resists the ‘leap’ as it involves a denial of his autonomous existence and all interests in the here and now” (56).

The second result of the diary revelations is to replace the inaccuracies of Bendrix’s position with that of Sarah’s seemingly ingenuous perspective. After having made a desperate vow to God to spare Maurice Bendrix’s life, Sarah is torn between resentment of God and a secret desire for spiritual intimacy with her creator. Can a childhood baptism into Catholicism show spontaneous effect even after a long period of time? In writing of the tension between her love of Bendrix and that of God, she moves to sublimate the conflict into a more unified perspective:

> Did I ever love Maurice as much before I loved You? Or was it really You

> I loved all the time? Did I touch You when I touched him? Could I have touched You if I hadn't touched him first, touched him as I never touched Henry, anybody? And he loved me and touched me as he never did any other woman. But was it me he loved, or You? For he hated in me the things You hate. He was on Your side all the time without knowing it. (EA. 99)

Both are aware of the subtle nature of such conclusion. Bendrix confesses, after reading the letter, "what an optimist I would be if I thought that this story ended here" (EA. 121), and Sarah's attempt to balance the parts of her life collapses in the face of desire: "I'm tired and I don't want any more pain. I want Maurice. I want ordinary corrupt human love. Dear God, you know I want to want Your pain, but I don't want it now. Take it away for a while and give it me another time" (EA. 99). Still the pressure for resolution is enormous, and as each evaluates the past, their voices are marked by similar claims to an exclusive truth. Sarah's understanding of the end of the affair ardently acknowledges the theological explanation:

> I don't want to live without you . . . But what's the good, Maurice? I believe the whole bag of tricks, there's nothing I don't believe . . . I'm sure. I've never been sure before about anything. When you came in at the door with the blood on your face, I became sure. Once and for all . . . Maurice, dear, don't be angry. Be sorry for me, but don't be angry. I'm a phoney and a fake, but this isn't phoney or fake. I used to think I was sure about myself and what was right and wrong, and you taught me not to be sure. You took

> away all my lies and self-deceptions like they clear a road of rubble for somebody to come along it, somebody of importance, and now he's come . . . .(EA. 121)

Bendrix's reading of the mystery of Sarah has reached a humiliating climax, and he rebels against the counterplot which has turned what he sees as an accidental effect - Sarah's baptism - into a strong cause of sainthood: "It's just a coincidence, I thought, a horrible coincidence that nearly brought her back at the end to You. You can't mark a two-year-old child for life with a bit of water and a prayer . . . When she slept, I was with her, not You. It was I who penetrated her, not You" (EA. 137).

The End of the Affair contains a masterly study of possessive love and sexual jealousy which reveals Greene's very deep psychological insight into the human mind. We realize at the end that the real theme of the novel is the working of divine grace rather than sexual jealousy. This novel, like Greene's other religious novels, is mainly concerned with the leap of faith and his impatience with the Church and its belief. De Vitis here tries to emphasize the contradictory nature of Sarah's love and faith in God: "Having once experienced perfect human love with Bendrix, however, Sarah renounces him for God, and nothing short of divine love will satisfy her. Unconsciously she has made provision for God in her affair . . . " (100). According to S. K. Sharma, the novel provoked different critical reactions and received a mixed reception from Catholic and non-Catholic critics alike:

> The orthodox Catholics felt scandalized at the insinuation that adultery can lead to sainthood. The secular readers could not conceal their discomfort at Sarah's improbable leap into faith and the introduction of miracles into a

> work of art for the purposes of religious edification. But as John Atkins points out, one cannot challenge Greene's belief in the probability of miracles, because it is a part of his religious belief . . . Some of the basic tenets of Christianity like the divinity of Christ and resurrection are much more difficult to believe than a miraculous divine intervention in human affairs. (126)

A careful reading of the novel would reveal that Greene's own attitude to miracles and about the appropriateness of their place in fiction is uncertain. He leaves the question of Sarah's sainthood wide open and seems to be wondering with Bendrix whether God played a role in Sarah's leap to faith. Now Sarah has been captivated by God.

Sarah realizes the inevitability of pain in her adulthood and links the pain and her inner conflict with the meaning of the next world. In her diary Sarah has written: "Did I ever love Maurice as much before I loved You? Or was it really You I loved all the time? . . . But You are too good to me. When I ask You for pain, You give me peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace – he needs it more" (EA. 99). Gangeshwar Rai in his *Graham Greene: An Existential Approach,* establishes Sarah's belief in God and her total surrender: "Sarah walks the narrow path of faith and gradually and painfully realizes God's love. She opens herself to God in a spirit of self-surrender and experiences the delight in spite of all her agony and realizes that her affair with Bendrix was but a figure in the tapestry of divine purpose" (56).At the initial stage, both Sarah and Bendrix are lovers living for the pleasures of the moment. Sarah, a woman of loose moral whose husband is sexually impotent, has adulterous

relationship with different kinds of men and Bendrix is only one of many men - the most favourite lover for the moment.

Being a woman without scruples, Sarah passionately offers herself to Bendrix. She loves him and believes in him as fervently and deeply as she later believes in God. Henry's pre-occupation with office work has deprived him of his humanity and love as remembered by Bendrix from the reports of Sarah herself that:

> he had long ceased to feel any physical desire for her . . . His desire was simply for companionship: he felt for the first time excluded from Sarah's confidence: he was worried and despairing – he didn't know what was going on or what was going to happen. He was living in a terrible insecurity. (EA.31-32)

It was while writing his story about the civil servant and trying to understand the working of Sarah's mind, that Bendrix falls in love with her. The passion that begins their love affair is later replaced by pure human love. Both Sarah and Bendrix suffer from a terrible feeling of anxiety and despair in their romantic life. When she realizes that Bendrix has only suffered minor injuries, Sarah believes that she must fulfill what she has vowed, even though she is in doubt whether she believes in God. Sarah transforms her human love for the divine love. In the knowledge of the divine love, Sarah finds inner peace.

Sarah's prayer for the rebirth of Bendrix, "Let him be alive, and I'll believe . . . I will give him up for ever, only let him be alive" (EA. 76) is as the prayers of the whisky-priest in *The Power and the Glory,* and Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*. Sarah, like the whisky-priest and Scobie, prays in a state `of powerlessness and hence

her

prayer is answered. She herself reflects: “When you are hopeless enough . . . you can pray for miracles. They happen, don’t they, to the poor, and I was poor” (EA. 58). Now Sarah, a modern sophisticated woman, too worldly in her sensibility, is tormented by a conflict between her desires to be another self. Sarah, who is concerned with living in the present without the thought of the past and the future, and whose love for Bendrix continues as strongly as ever, has to reconcile herself to a life without Bendrix. The feelings of misery and emptiness make Sarah arrogant and upset and she questions the existence of a merciful God: “He doesn’t exist . . . He can’t exist. You can’t have a merciful God and this despair” (EA. 74). Linked with her questioning of the real existence of God and the survival of Bendrix Sarah exclaims thus: “whether you exist or whether you don’t exist, whether you gave Maurice a second chance or whether I imagined everything” (EA. 93).

Without real belief in God, Sarah tries to convince herself that her vow to a God whom she does not believe in is not and cannot be serious and she need not keep it. Gangeshwar Rai describes the inner struggle of Bendrix thus: “Like Sarah, Bendrix too suffers from a deep sense of despair resulting from the frustration of his desire. Shocked by the sudden end of his love affair with Sarah and the vision of her abandoning herself to another man, Bendrix, like Scobie, plans his suicide” (55). Bendrix imagines that Sarah, being captivated by a stranger’s influence, is in abandonment and feels insecure and disappointed: “I began quite seriously to think of suicide” (EA. 59).

A detailed examination of the miracles would be helpful to the readers to

consider those miracles as the mysterious intervention of God: “In a week or two he’ll be speaking about it on the Common and showing his healed face. It will be in the newspapers: ‘Rationalist Speaker Converted by Miraculous Cure.’ I tried to summon up all my faith in coincidence” (EA. 157). Parkis’s boy being cured by a book of Sarah, as he told the doctor, “it was Mrs. Miles who came and took away the pain - touching him on the right side of the stomach . . . and she wrote in the book for him” (EA. 149), confirms the presence of the miraculous incident in life.

All the characters in this novel are faulty, but none is unsympathetic. Greene has a great skill for getting sympathy and understanding for his characters despite their human weaknesses. This is true of the three main characters, Bendrix, Sarah and Henry. It is because the characters are sympathetically portrayed that we can believe in their spiritual journey, as not only Sarah, but also Bendrix and Smythe, are drawn reluctantly towards God.

The epigraph for *The End of the Affair* is borrowed from Leon Bloy: “Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence” (EA. xvi). Greene here intends to show that goodness can be achieved in this world but only through suffering. Sarah Miles, in *The End of the Affair*, is as altruistic as Major Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*. She loves to help people and wants to suffer in place of others. Sarah had sacrificed her love for Bendrix’s life. She wants to offer up excessive sacrifices for those she loves: her husband Henry Miles, her lover Maurice Bendrix, and her admirer Richard Smythe. Sarah overcomes her human weaknesses which make her aware of her own unworthiness: “I’m a bitch and a fake and I hate myself” (EA. 76). She wants to

sacrifice herself for the suffering of humanity like Christ: “Let me think of those awful spots on Richard Smythe’s cheek. Let me see Henry’s face with tears falling. Let me forget me” (EA. 96). Sarah’s total surrender to God and her selfless love and sacrifice for others is reflected in her prayer:

> Dear God, I’ve tried to love and I’ve made such a hash of it. If I could love you, I’d know how to love them . . . I believe you died for us. I believe you are God. Teach me to love. I don’t mind my pain. It’s their pain I can’t stand. Let my pain go on and on, but stop theirs. Dear God, if only you could come down from your Cross for a while and let me get up there instead. If I could suffer like you, I could heal like you. (EA. 96)

Sarah trusts God most of all. Because she gradually surrenders self-will, Sarah is heaven-bound. Unable to bear her inner tension by the conflict between faith and love, she prays to God for death: “I don’t know how I am going to live in this pain and longing and I’m praying to God all the time that he won’t be hard on me, that he won’t keep me alive” (EA. 120). The more Sarah falls in love with God, the more Maurice Bendrix, her rejected lover, falls in hate. According to John Atkins, “Bendrix’s moral deterioration is pictured by Greene towards the end of the novel. After the death of Sarah, his hatred has lost its object, and so it is transferred to God. God had her now, and he should be hated as bitterly as Henry and Smythe had been - and, of course, Sarah herself” (196). Bendrix refuses and reacts to the fact revealed by Fr. Crompton that he is in pain: “You’re wrong, father. This isn’t anything subtle like pain. I’m not in pain, I’m in hate. I hate Sarah because she was a little tart, I hate

Henry because she stuck to him, and I hate you and your imaginary God because you took her away from all of us" (EA. 151).

The novel reveals Greene's obsession with the themes of human misery, alienation, love and suffering. Bendrix recognizes the Divine intervention in his own life and Sarah's; but in a state of uncertainty, it is impossible to differentiate for him whether to love or to hate God: "I said to her, I'm a man of hate. But I didn't feel much hatred, I had called other people hysterical, but my own words were overcharged. I could detect their insincerity" (EA. 159). Thus, the novel presents the full scope of Greene's revealing observations of Bendrix and Sarah concerning their attitude towards God.

In Bible also one may observe how Luke compares Simon and the woman in their attitude towards Jesus. Though Simon invited Jesus for dinner he does not welcome Jesus, whereas the woman extends it without any reservation. This is the sign of love and gratitude for forgiveness. She shows her thankfulness by expressing her love. Jesus assures her of forgiveness for all her sins. Even the guests of Simon realize that Jesus is more than a prophet with the authority to forgive sins. Jesus also admits and activates her faith to receive forgiveness and peace as faith is the basis for forgiveness, indicating a human response to divine initiative. By responding to the divine initiative, the woman is saved and she can go in peace. A strong connection between salvation and forgiveness is established here. The woman can live in peace experiencing the fullness of compassionate forgiveness. The experience of forgiveness brings to her the freedom from the severe burden of moral debt so much so that God has visited her and redeemed her. Jesus is a compassionate Saviour, whose mission is

to seek and to save the lost. A repentant sinner always hears His consoling words of forgiveness, “your sins are forgiven”. Jerome Kodell in *The Gospel According to Luke*, explains thus:

> Jesus says that the woman has already been forgiven her sins; that is evident because of her love. She would not be able to show such love unless she had first accepted love (forgiveness, acceptance). The forgiveness has set her free to love. When Jesus says “your sins are forgiven,” he is confirming what is already true in her. (47)

The sinful woman is consoled by the forgiving words of Jesus and expresses her gratitude and love in this episode. She surrenders her entire life to Jesus and remains an ardent follower to Him. The divine intervention is seen in both the fictional and Biblical characters to keep their promise of surrendering themselves to God and following Him till the end of their lives.

Invariably in all the novels of Greene, one may find God’s forgiveness in the life of a sinner who repents. Real repentance inspires the sinner to turn away from the sinful ways once and for ever. John G. McKenzie says: “In a true repentance the consciousness of outraging God’s love is far more prominent than any concern of the sinner with his own fate. He may feel he is ‘hell-deserving’, but his anxiety is for restored relations with God” (162). De Vitis is so convinced of this reality in the life of Sarah and remarks:

> To make her keep her promise, God sends grace in every conceivable way: an unanswered telephone keeps Sarah from talking to Bendrix; a racking

> cough prevents her kissing him when she does see him; a husband's early return ties her to her home when she has decided to abandon her promise; and death, at the right moment, keeps her from losing all. Sarah succumbs to the grace of God and becomes a saint. (99)

The novel appears to be transcendent for the nature of divine love and the miracles after her death, suggest that Sarah might be a saint. What makes this novel extraordinary are the moments when the rain and misery and hate suddenly stop and at the end of the novel one finds the moments of pure love. According to De Vitis, Sarah's passionate love for Bendrix is only a shadow of the divine love.

> Sarah finds in him the lover her husband has never been. When she tells Bendrix that she never loved anybody or anything as she does him, she does not realize that this 'perfect' human relationship is but a shadow of a greater love. In her complete abandonment to her lover she reckons at this point only on the gratification of her physical passions; she does not realize the emptiness of her spiritual self. . . . Sarah renounces him for God, and nothing short of divine love will satisfy her. (100)

In *The End of the Affair*, unlike other characters, God is in search of Sarah, although she attempts to flee from Him. She is very much in love with Bendrix, since her marriage to Henry is a dead, loveless one. She therefore tries to convince herself that God does not exist, believing that, if there is no God, a vow made to Him is not binding on her, and that she can continue her affair with Bendrix with a clear conscience. She befriends Richard Smythe, a militant atheist, and it is found that the more Smythe tries to persuade her the more she comes to believe in God's existence.

observes that Sarah believes in God's existence but hates Him, because she has to keep the promise she has taken regarding her love-affair: ". . . Her hatred is, paradoxically, the statement of her love - she has yet to learn to put her trust in God. And this she cannot do until she acknowledges the fact that by betraying her out of physical life, he has shown her the way to spiritual life" (102). But in a different context, De Vitis is convinced of Sarah's true love and belief:

> In her love for Bendrix, Sarah finds love for God . . . In learning to love God, Sarah finds peace, which she leaves to Bendrix as her legacy . . . Again Greene echoes Eliot's "Ash Wednesday" as Sarah prays for strength and asks for peace. Sarah's suffering teaches her not only to believe in God, to love him, but to have faith in him. Her faith is her trust, and it is as firm as that of the greatest saints. (103)

Sarah loves God and enjoys heavenly peace and joy. She also wants to make Bendrix experience the same peace and joy and so she asks God: "When I ask You for pain, You give me peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace – he needs it more" (EA. 99). In the letter to Bendrix, she says, "I believe there's a God - I believe the whole bag of tricks, there's nothing I don't believe . . . I've fallen into belief like I fell in love . . . I fought belief for longer than I fought love, but I haven't any fight left" (EA. 121). Greene's description of Bendrix seeing Sarah after two years is pictured with the indifferent emotion:

> How can I make a stranger see her as she stopped in the hall at the foot of the stairs and turned to us? I have never been able to describe even my

> fictitious characters except by their actions . . . Now I am betrayed by my own technique, for I do not want any other woman substituted for Sarah, I want the reader to see . . . all I can convey is an indeterminate figure turning in the dripping mackintosh, saying, Yes, Henry? and then You?. (EA. 11)

The end of the novel indeed is so complex and there is a gravitational pull towards God despite the fact that none of the characters really believes in God. The author tries to establish the existence and love of God through the transformation of the characters and the miraculous intervention of God after the death of Sarah Miles.

The diary of Sarah is the only evidence of her problem, concerned with the basic choice that she has to make. In her diary she unfolds her union with God that she leaves Bendrix for ever after his rebirth or resuscitation. She records all the details of her suffering in her diary. Only when Bendrix reads her diary, he realizes the truth of her encounter with God. B. P. Lamba comments on the information from her diary and Bendrix's reaction on account of this:

> Later on when Bendrix comes to know of the truth, he realizes that God is his rival in love. This information, vital to the novel, is provided by Sarah's diary. Her diary also helps us to understand the ultimate end of the affair: Sarah loving God and agnostic Bendrix believing in the existence of God. This is done by revealing the view of Bendrix that is not only inadequate, but is also inaccurate. (88)

Greene describes the affair between Sarah and Bendrix in a way the readers can imagine everything. Though his love seems passionate and real, Sarah suddenly ends

the affair with him

the day when Bendrix falls unconscious. Something intangible and spiritual happens to Sarah while Bendrix is unconscious. It also leads in an unexpected direction regarding the existence of God. Bendrix, being a skeptic, can't deal with the new situation of Sarah. By the time Sarah dies, Bendrix has become a better man; he has learned compassion for humanity in general and for Henry in particular, but he has also been emotionally worn-out and can only pray, to a deity in whom he tentatively believes but certainly does not love.

The Hound of Heaven has caught up with this nonbeliever and torn out his heart. The movement from human love to the love of God is made explicit, so that belief and faith are revealed in a realistic experience. In *The End of the Affair*, one may find strong influence of St. Augustine and St. John of the Cross. Parkis's hunt for Sarah and God's pursuit of Sarah and Bendrix may be the reflections of the hounds of Heaven. They may also have experienced the dark night of the soul with severe inner struggle. De Vitis observes Bendrix's belief in God and his spiritual dilemma: "Bendrix attempts to deny God, but God is too persistent a pursuer" (99). De Vitis tries to probe into the spiritual obsession of Greene and his interest in the spiritual conflicts of great saints and renowned literary giants:

> . . . in *The End of the Affair*, he relies as heavily on "Ash Wednesday". Greene's interest in St. John of the Cross is patent . . . Both Sarah and Bendrix, within broad outline, follow the pattern of spiritual awareness described in *La Noce Oscura*. Here John describes the individual soul

> entering into a period of purgation, and he describes the battle between the spirit and the senses. (99)

It should be noted that T. S. Eliot's depiction of demon on the stair in his "Ash Wednesday", is borrowed from the Second Stanza of St. John of the Cross's *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*:

> In darkness, and secure,
>
> By the secret ladder, disguised,
>
> – Ah, the sheer grace! –
>
> In darkness and concealment,
>
> My house being now all stilled; (CW. 68)).

De Vitis adds to this contribution of St. John and shows how Greene applies it in this novel:

> John describes, as does Eliot, the penitent experiencing despair, rebellion, and drought in his ascent to heaven. He speaks constantly of love, the interceding factor in helping man on his way to God, and John does not minimize the influence of the senses. Like Eliot, Greene makes conscious use of this symbolism, particularly that of the stair. (99)

Sarah in her diary describes of the dream she once had, while climbing the staircase:

> Two days ago I had such a sense of peace and quiet and love. Life was going to be happy again, but last night I dreamed I was walking up a long staircase to meet Maurice at the top. I was still happy . . . but it wasn't Maurice's voice that answered; it was a stranger's that boomed like a fog-horn warning lost ships, and scared me . . . and going down the stairs again

the water rose beyond my waist and the hall was thick with mist. (EA. 99)

Sarah gradually realizes the meaninglessness of love and refuses to speak of the permanence of their love when Bendrix asks her to share. Bendrix is always jealous of Sarah, for he fears that one day she will cease to love him and also believes in her capacity to end their affair.

The novel, *The End of the Affair* is a record of hate more than of love. In the words of De Vitis, " Bendrix's hatred and jealousy flare again even though he has had no contact with Sarah for several years" (101). Once Bendrix learns of her love for God, he transfers his hatred from Sarah to God. With all the strength of his love, he begins to hate God. But, Bendrix realizes that he can't hate God because it implies belief in God. He understands Sarah's actions now, so he can't hate her anymore. He realizes that Henry didn't win her back after all, so there's no point hating him. Finally Sarah agrees to meet with him again. But, already stricken with a cough, returning home from their luncheon in the rain she becomes quite ill, sickens and dies. Bendrix learns that she is planning on converting to Catholicism and may receive a Christian burial. In the end, inevitably, Bendrix comes to accept God and Sarah suffers and dies rather than break her oath to God and precisely the example of her faith brings him to God. De Vitis is of the opinion that "Sarah's suffering teaches her not only to believe in God, to love him, but to have faith in him. Her faith is her trust, and it is as firm as that of the greatest saints" (103). B. P. Lamba asserts that in *The End of the Affair*,

we have a still more clear view of the mystery of God's love turning man's

> behaviour from human lust to Divine Passion. Bendrix till the end states that he hates God. It is only in the end that he acknowledges the existence of God whom he has always considered his enemy. And Sarah believes that Bendrix loves even his enemies. (62)

Bendrix's love has become real, because the presence of God revealing through various miracles makes even Maurice Bendrix, the atheist, accept and believe in God.

In Greene's play, *The Potting Shed*, James, the son of the rationalist Henry Callifer, was found as a child hanging dead in the potting shed and was restored to life by the prayers of his uncle, Father Callifer. Father Callifer's prayers to restore James' life remind us of the prayers offered by Sarah to restore the life of Bendrix. Father Callifer offered his faith in return for James' life. Father Callifer prayed: "Let him live God . . . I will give you anything if you will let him live . . . Take away my faith, but let him live" (*Three Plays*, 138). At once his prayers were answered and James' life was saved. Greene thus refers to and ascertains the mysterious power of prayer in some of his works.

The novel gives an account of human love combined with jealousy and hatred followed by the unexpected intricacies through the intrusion of divine love. God, the unwelcome intruder, intervenes in their human relationships and transforms their affair for ever. Bendrix, as he discovers the identity of the third man in the love triangle, is too tired to challenge this villain. But Bendrix realizes that Sarah is in a bargain with God for his sake and deliberately avoids him to keep the promise she has taken for his sake. She is forced to go out into the rain to avoid him, but due to her poor health and the strain to struggle between human love and supernatural

commitment, dies of pneumonia. The critics are ready to admit and accept Sarah as a saint but all the same wonder how adultery can lead to sainthood. Sarah seems to be struggling between physical lust and divine commitment. She undergoes severe inner conflict between belief and disbelief that her tormented mind makes her body so weak that she gets pneumonia. At the end, she is forced to express how she is converted to real belief: “I believe there’s a God . . . I’ve caught belief like a disease” (EA. 121).

There are different provocative and offensive critical reactions against the novel, *The End of the Affair*. Some are scandalized at the suggestion that adultery can lead to sainthood. Some others are offended at the heroine’s incredible leap into faith and the introduction of the miracles into a fictional work immediately after her death. But some critics consider the reality that Greene’s belief is indisputable in the case of miracles in the context of his Catholic belief.

Greene’s attitude to miracles and his belief in the mysterious aspect of divine intervention in man’s life, however, are uncertain. He leaves the issues of Sarah’s leap to faith and sainthood, the miracles after her death and the belief and disbelief of Bendrix and Sarah etc., wide open to the readers to distinguish and identify. Bendrix’s disbelief is obviously expressed after the death of Sarah:

> I thought, you’ve failed there, Sarah . . . I have no peace and I have no love, except for you . . . For if this God exists, I thought, and if even you - with your lusts and your adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell - can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all: if you are a saint, it’s not so difficult

> to be a saint. It's something He can demand of any of us, leap. But I won't leap . . . You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap. But I don't want Your peace and I don't want your love . . . I hate You, God, I hate you as though you existed. (EA. 159)

Bendrix expresses his disbelief in God even after his rebirth and knowing well of Sarah's private vow for the sake of his new life. His words reflect his jealousy and hatred towards God on account of captivating Sarah for ever. He is provoked by Father Crompton's remarks about Sarah as a good woman. Sarah, on the contrary, is obliged to believe in God and so she can't break her vow. Even though she is not sure whether her private contract with God counts or not, she is convinced of the amazing reality that there is a living God who responds to the human needs. S. K. Sharma remarks, "But if the critics insist on inferring that Bendrix had died and had been miraculously restored to life in answer to Sarah's prayer, it suits Greene better" (128).

Critics wonder whether Sarah is capable of becoming a saint in spite of her past sinful life. De Vitis comments on Greene's outlook while writing *The End of the Affair*: "Greene attempts to tell the story of a saint. If the reader remembers his assertion that the greatest saints have been men with more than a normal capacity for evil, the obvious parallels of Mary Magdalene and St. Augustine come to mind" (97). Sarah's sinful past, her conversion at the end and total renunciation of the worldly pleasures for the love of God are to be compared with those great saints. Sarah's diary is the only source of convictions regarding her belief and disbelief. At times Sarah expresses her firm belief in God even when she struggles for physical love. After making a decision to follow God, Sarah puts an informal question to Bendrix, "My

dear, my

dear.

People go on loving God, don't they, all their lives without seeing Him?" (EA. 54). She indirectly prepares his mind to love and believe in a God, who is capable of raising him from the dead. But at the same time, when she is in need of Bendrix's loving presence once again, she forgets about the seriousness of the vow she has taken at the cost of his life: "A vow's not all that important – a vow to somebody I've never known, to somebody I don't really believe in. Nobody will know that I've broken a vow, except me and Him – and He doesn't exist, does he? He can't exist. You can't have a merciful God and this despair" (EA. 74). Sarah, somehow, comes to the realization that there is a God to convert her and ultimately writes in her last letter to Bendrix: "I've fallen into belief like I fell in love" (EA. 121). Sarah, thus leaps into real faith towards the end of her life. She undergoes terrible inner struggle during the period of her conversion. In spite of her weaknesses, God helps Sarah by sending grace and strength in order to keep her promise.

According to the Catholic belief, miracles are the consequences of supernatural intervention of God in certain impossible and unbelievable circumstances of human life, which is quite unbelievable to man. Here in the novel, one may find some miracles taking place immediately after the death of Sarah. But the first miracle occurs when she is alive herself in a sinful state. This is how Greene works out the intensity of Sarah's miraculous powers. The first miracle happens, Bendrix coming back to life after the bomb blast as a result of Sarah's bargain with God and her private vow to God for his second life. The healing of the stomach pain of Parkis's boy with the

miraculous touch of Sarah's book is supposed to be the first miracle after her death. The disappearance of Smythe's strawberry mark - is the next miracle explained rationally in the novel. Bendrix creates an explanation for Smythe's cure: "I've read somewhere that urticaria is hysterical in origin. A mixture of psychiatry and radium. It sounded plausible. Perhaps after all it was truth. Another coincidence, two cars with the same number plate, and I thought with a sense of weariness, how many coincidences are there going to be?" (EA. 158). The rationalist Smythe is cured of his strawberry birth-mark after he has been kissed by Sarah. Even though coincidences are considered to be normal, readers may suspect the intention of the author. But in all, Sarah's faith is pictured as the sign of her love for God.

Sarah is convinced that her sinful life is forgiven and she is accepted by God. As a result, she begins to have faith in His miraculous power and that she loves Him and submits herself totally to the will of God, renouncing her lover Bendrix and her past sinful life for ever. Similarly, in the life of the anonymous 'sinful woman' depicted in the Bible by St. Luke, one may find the nature of Jesus' forgiving love towards the woman and her response to His love, forgiveness and acceptance in her life. Scholars are of the opinion that there is a prior experience of forgiveness for which the woman came to Jesus to express her gratitude. During the time of Jesus, it should be observed that the Jews had no word for spelling out 'thank you'. Instead, they expressed their gratitude through their actions. Some of those actions are expressed by the 'sinful woman' in this episode. And her actions symbolize the best form of thankfulness. In fact, we all need God's forgiveness, but we may be blind to our sinfulness or proud to pray for forgiveness and so we may be under the bondage of

our guilt, which keeps us away from the freedom of love.

In the novel, Sarah Miles herself is identified as an adulterous woman; where as the ‘sinful woman’s identity is not revealed in the Biblical passage. She is reputed to be a prostitute, but the only clues in the Biblical text given are her unbound hair and that she has with her a jar of ointment, which might have been used in the activities associated with her trade of prostitution. Nothing is said about the nature of the woman’s sin in the Bible. In the book of Numbers, there is a reference regarding this tradition. “And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman’s head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands” (Num. 5.18). The sinful woman knows well that letting down her hair in the public is a great scandal, but in her love and gratitude for Jesus, the woman forgets all such social practices and uses what is available to wipe Jesus’ feet.

Jesus’ words to the woman at the end of the parable highlight Simon’s ignorance of the fact that her sins are already forgiven by Jesus. Jesus sends the woman on her way with a blessing. Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke. 7. 50). His blessing speaks of her ‘faith’ that has saved her and released her of her sins. At the end of Sarah’s life, she undergoes severe spiritual conflict between faith and disbelief in God and the Church. Both Sarah and the ‘sinful woman’ undergo a tough spiritual struggle of good and evil within their minds for the right choice. Renunciation to the worldly pleasures in order to attain the endless spiritual joy for ever, is the ultimate aim to both of them. In order to achieve this

difficult task, they are ready to suffer hard and to renounce everything they had enjoyed earlier. Both of them believe in the mighty power of God, put their trust and submit everything to Him. Their total surrender to God strengthens them to win the battle, where we find the unconditional and categorical victory of good over evil.

Once again attention may be drawn **t**oward the last part of *The End of the Affair*, where Sarah Miles comes to the feet of God, sitting in a corner of the Church, surrendering herself to God as part of fulfilling her private vow. As she is convinced of the miraculous intervention of God in the life of Bendrix, she is filled with love and gratitude. In spite of her physical weaknesses, she is determined to remain in the Divine presence and to enjoy inner peace and heavenly joy. Similarly, at the end of her sinful life, the 'sinful woman' also comes to the feet of Jesus, as she is overwhelmed with love for Jesus and sorrow for her sins. She is trying to express the torrents of love for Jesus flowing from her heart. She loves Him more because she is forgiven more by Jesus. Her great love proves that her many sins are forgiven. By imparting forgiveness, Jesus uproots evil from the sinful woman's heart, converting her to a thoroughly new individual with goodness and holiness. Forgiveness is the best form of God's expression of compassion. Jesus is pictured as a compassionate Savior, whose mission is to seek and to save the lost. Greg W. Forbes comments, "Jesus' habitual association with sinners and outcasts is one of the most widely accepted axioms in New Testament Scholarship" (293). Sarah Miles of *The End of the Affair*, is forgiven by God and it is proved from the miraculous re-birth of Bendrix after her prayer and private vow to God. In the words of Cedric Watts, "Sarah makes a wager with God that if He will save her lover's life, she will abandon the adulterous affair;

and the life is saved; and thereafter she becomes a miracle-worker" (95). Thus it is certain that God has uprooted evil from her heart and converted her from sinner to saint. Sarah proves herself to be capable of loving God even without His presence, "People go on loving God, don't they, all their lives without seeing Him?" (EA. 58). Both Sarah and the 'sinful woman' believe to the hilt, in God's capacity to forgive sins and his power to convert them from sinfulness to saintliness.

The spiritual conflicts and the heavenly joy of the anonymous 'sinful woman' depicted in the Gospel according to St. Luke, are compared with that of Sarah Miles in *The End of the Affair*. The celestial bliss enjoyed by both Sarah Miles and the 'sinful woman' is discussed and evaluated with reference to the process of sanctification through their spiritual conflicts. In the novel, Sarah Miles renounces all the worldly pleasures forever and enjoys Celestial Bliss spending the rest of her life with God. The 'sinful woman' also enjoys inner peace and joy at the feet of Jesus, while washing His feet with her tears. The process of sanctification in the life of Sarah and the 'sinful woman' is made possible only with the help of Divine mercy and Grace.

Chapter V

Conclusion

> For goodness' sake . . . don't imagine you - or - I know a thing about God's mercy . . . The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart.
>
> - Greene, *The Heart of the Matte*r (272)

As Greene's novels primarily deal with the fallen men and their spiritual struggle, it is assumed that Greene himself is obsessed with the problems of good and evil. In his Catholic novels, especially *The Heart of the Matter*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair*, one finds eternal and spiritual war waged between good and evil, where, the minds of the characters themselves become battle-fields. Greene pictures a world, abandoned by God and depicts man with a constant inner struggle to attain salvation. As Thomas Merton asserts in his book, *The Seven Storey Mountain*: "It is only the infinite mercy and love of God that has prevented us from tearing ourselves to pieces and destroying His entire creation long ago" (158). According to Mesnet, "Greene's characters share his own continuous agony of mind" (113). A reading of Greene's fictional works convinces the readers about the growing mental anguish experienced by modern man as, to a great extent, due to the decay of religious faith. Greene himself undergoes the state of belief and disbelief in certain life situations. George Orwell, in *The New Yorker*, protests against Greene's contradictory belief: "Greene appears to believe that sin is glorious that there is something rather *distingue* in being damned" (61).

According to the norms of Christian belief sin and suffering are always related

to

salvation. Bear the cross and wear the crown is one of the central themes of Christian existence and philosophy. Christianity teaches man that sin is the root cause of human misery. It is Satan, who is responsible for the existence of evil in the world. He is bent on establishing his power by working against God. One can overcome evil only by the grace of God. Fulton. J Sheen, in his radio address delivered on March 9, 1941, spoke on "War and Guilt", where he emphasizes the inner conflict of man thus: "To escape this inner conflict, modern man constantly seeks to fill the void which only God can fill" (*The Catholic Hour*, 118). For, out of evil, God alone is able to draw good. Thus affirms Peter Milward: "According to Christian theologians evil itself contributes to the total good of the universe. For without evil there would be no occasion for the practice of certain virtues, such as patience and forgiveness; and it is against its dark background that the light of goodness shines out with more splendors" (45). Greene is a writer, who delves deep into hate and lust to discover the secret of love, and explores the various intricacies of sin to develop the possibilities of salvation. He often plunges into violence in search of peace and wades through chaos in search of order. This chapter gives the concluding ideas of the present study, where readers can get a true picture of the spiritual battle of the characters of Graham Greene, in parallelism with the respective Biblical *personae*. This is the concluding chapter of the study with a gist of all the previous chapters spelt out with retrospective hindsight.

The three novels selected for the study are *The Heart of the Matter*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair*. The Biblical models for this parallel study are Samson, the last Judge of Israel (O.T.), King David, the second King of Israel

(O.T.) and the anonymous ‘sinful woman’ in the Gospel according to St. Luke (N.T.). As Greene believes in the mysterious ways and the inexplicable strength of God, this chapter reflects the different types of battlefields and the internal and external spiritual conflicts of the characters in the novels as well as in the Holy Bible. In this parallel study, when an analysis is made regarding the various types of conflicts, one may find several similarities and dissimilarities in the fictional characters, Henry Scobie, the whisky priest and Sarah Miles with those respective Biblical personae Samson, King David and the ‘sinful woman’. The contradictory nature of Greene’s fictional characters are reflected and emphasized in the words of B. P. Lamba: “the whisky-priest and Scobie the just, whose lives represent a sharper and profound vision” (64). The films of Greene’s novels as well as Biblical models provide an impressive contribution to the present study. Though the films made on Greene’s novels appear to be somewhat different from the original, they are well appreciated by the public, for they are considerably more appealing to the present society. On the other hand, the films on the Biblical models give a very informative picture regarding the historical background and the inner struggles and conflicts of the characters during their spiritual journey.

T. S. Eliot’s *Wasteland*, Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Tagore’s *Postmaster*, Kazanthzakis’ *Last Temptation of Jesus Christ*, etc., will give parallel characters and situations for further studies of this kind. St. Teresa of Avila, St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis of Assisi etc., and a number of other Biblical characters and certain historical figures appear to be further models that can be subjected to such a parallel study. They have the authenticity to teach modern man of the meaning of

suffering and to guide them through the process of sanctification, bearing pain in order to achieve greater glory. Since it is impossible to make a study of all of them in the limited scope of the present study, only three Biblical models are selected for the purpose. Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, in her study of Greene's 'trilogy' - *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter* - remarks: "With Rose we meet for the first time the theme of the supreme sacrifice, offered to God for the love and salvation of men, which in the other novels will take the extreme form of the whisky-priest's martyrdom and Scobie's oblation" (99-100). In the novel, *Brighton Rock*, one finds the sacrificial love of Rose in her words: "I want to be like him - damned" (BR. 330). At the end of the novel, *Brighton Rock*, readers may find Rose as the means of Pinkie's presumed salvation. K. S. Subramaniam, in his observation suggests: "The whisky-priest also sacrifices himself to the people he serves. His heart is filled with the love of God and an enormous tenderness for the image of God. When he dreams of his daughter, he prays, 'Oh God, help her. Damn me, I deserve it, but let her live for ever" (PG. 269).

In *The Power and the Glory*, one finds the real conflict between the power of God and the power of Godless state, where at the end, religion triumphs and the victory of the Church can be seen through the martyrdom of the priest. Karl Patten compares the priest's martyrdom with Christ's self-sacrifice: "Those around him are like the priest and the priest is like Christ. *The Power and the Glory* finds its deepest source in the incarnation" (226). Greene's novels are known as Catholic novels, for, George Orwell asserts: "the conflict not only between this world and the next world

but between sanctity and goodness is a fruitful theme of which the ordinary, unbelieving writer cannot make use. Graham Greene used it once successfully, in *The Power and the Glory*" (CCE. 105).

The conflict between the forces of good and evil in the human hearts is seen in *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* in quite different manners. Here are various battlefields, where the real battle between the forces of good and evil takes place in the souls of Scobie, the whisky priest and Sarah Miles. George Woodcock states: "Theologically Greene may recognize original sin, but in his writings, the evil in man is always less than the evil without arising from the collective activities of society. His observation of humanity forces him into a revolutionary attitude" (199). Sometimes Greene obviously speaks of his disbelief through his characters. David Pryce-Jones states: "Bendrix cried out that God was a devil tempting him to leap. Both he and Scobie performed the eschatological somersault that God instructed them to do in His gymnasium on earth . . . Fowler never heard the orders" (94).

The Catholic critics claim that Greene's novels are obsessed with good and evil. Marie Beatrice-Mesnet is of the opinion that, "only through violence and hell are we brought to faith and heaven" (12). Greene's heroes are little, ordinary men and it is obvious in his portrayal of characters like the whisky priest, Querry, Pinkie, Scobie, Bendrix etc. In a B. B. C. Talk on Greene, Angus Wilson says, "He was one of the first people to begin to speak about the little man, the man in the mackintosh, the 'lost people', the wanderers; the heroes are the lowly, the depraved, the broken down and so on" (*The Listener*, 115-17). Greene's human sensibility is revealed in his character portrayal and his characters constantly try to attain glory through the endless war

between two equal powers of good and evil. This idea can be seen more obviously with the explanation of Frederick R. Karl: “In their attempt to transcend themselves through a knowledge of both God and the devil, they try to regain some sense of balance . . . Yet throughout their martyrdom, they are fully aware of the puniness of their selves . . . in their suffering, they come to terms with their individual salvation” (75). In *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays*, Greene advocates his view of the constant conflict between the concepts of good and evil: “Yet Oliver’s predicament, the nightmare fight between the darkness where the demons walk and the sunlight where ineffective goodness makes its last stand in a condemned world, will remain part of our imaginations forever” (LCOE. 61). Greene is obsessed with the concept of the conflict between good and evil. In *The Power and the Glory*, as Richard Kelly remarks, “the priest and the lieutenant embody the extreme dualism . . . Godliness versus Godlessness, love versus hatred, spirituality versus materialism, concern for the individual versus concern for the state” (51).

In this battlefield, though the whisky priest is aware of his own weaknesses, he is in a way, unable to save himself from degradation. In the words of Lamba, “he commits no evil deed, but suffers from the venial sin of pride” (45). Welcoming one’s own damnation for the salvation of others is a peculiar feature of Greene’s characters, and it is seen in *The Power and the Glory*, through the character of whisky priest: “He said, ‘Oh God, help her. Damn me, I deserve it, but let her live for ever’. This was the love he should have felt for every soul in the world” (PG. 250). In *The Heart of the Matter* also, one finds the same view of the author through the character of Scobie:

"Father', he prayed, 'give her peace. Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace" (PG. 141). In *The End of the Affair*, we find an extraordinary prayer of Sarah Miles for the life of her lover, Bendrix: "Dear God . . . I love him and I'll do anything if You'll make him alive, I said very slowly, I'll give him up for ever, only let him be alive with a chance" (EA. 76).

Greene tries to unite the power of evil with that of the good in this world with the merciful love of God. In the study of Greene's novels, Subramaniam asserts: "Scobie also wonders how so much of suffering and evil could co-exist with the infinite mercy and love of God" (24). Thus, what Greene wants to enlighten is nothing but the fact that God's grace works in men through inscrutable and mysterious ways. However, Greene suggests that it is religion which triumphs at the end. Greene gives more importance to the human heart. Scobie seems more afraid of hurting other human beings than of hurting God, and gives up his own soul to damnation; but, Sarah lets Bendrix suffer pain so as to obtain salvation for herself. Though Scobie, being a Catholic commits suicide, Greene attempts to picture the goodwill of Scobie. Roger Sharrock also dwells on this point of view:

> When he first begins to contemplate suicide, he reflects that though the Church teaches it is the unforgivable sin, yet it is also taught that God had sometimes broken his own laws, and was it more impossible for him to put out a hand of forgiveness into the suicidal darkness and chaos than to have woken himself in the tomb, behind the stone? (70)

Greene believes in the mercy of God and so the human heart is given more importance than sacrificial offerings to God. Even Christ himself had broken his laws especially

on

Sabbath day and justified: “Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? . . . I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day” (Matt. 12.5-8). God is merciful. He loves sinners as well as saints. God demands nothing but repentance of a sinner. Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea. 6.6). Thus Greene offers a tragic vision of man’s predicament by giving importance to the soul. In *The Heart of the Matter*, the author pictures it, as a mysterious reality that any human knowledge cannot grasp. This is the way Greene justifies the title of the novel. Still one may find Greene’s belief in the salvation of Scobie through his damnation. Greene is also influenced by the idea that Norman Vincent Peale is obsessed with: “No soul can be forever banned, eternally bereft, whoever falls from God’s right hand is caught into his left” (109).

Greene is obsessed with the awareness of sin, repentance, the divine mercy of God and salvation and they are found in almost all of his novels. Greene’s pre-occupation with evil is depicted in the form of sin and suffering in his Catholic novels. Sin, redemption and grace are the three fundamental ideas in the Christian religion. Christianity believes that through Adam’s sin man has cut himself off from supernatural life. However, Christ’s crucifixion has assured mankind of its redemption. It is accepted by the Christians that the soul is immortal. Sin deprives the soul of supernatural life, for it robs it of sanctifying grace. If a man dies in a state of mortal sin, he loses salvation. On account of the original sin of Adam and Eve, they

lost sanctifying grace, the right to heaven and they became subject to death, suffering and a strong inclination towards evil. Besides the original sin, there is actual sin which is of two types, mortal and venial. Mortal sin is a grievous offence against the law of God and it deprives the sinner of the sanctifying grace and makes the soul of the sinner doomed for the everlasting punishment in hell. Venial sin is a less serious offence against the law of God. Catholics believe in the Sacrament of Baptism by which all sins may, unconditionally, be forgiven if the one baptized keeps up the right disposition. Catholics also believe in the doctrine and Sacrament of Confession. The obligation to confess applies to mortal sin alone since the confession of venial sin is optional. The Sacraments are the channels through which the fruits of the redemption are applied to the individual soul. They are thus the channels of divine grace.

However, Greene condemns the traditional spirituality and the fundamental aspects of religion. Greene is of the conviction that faith is unconditional and it is the free movement of the heart. He believes that knowledge of God is an inward experience. The concept of salvation and the means by which it can be achieved may differ from man to man. Every protagonist in Greene's novels makes a continuous search for salvation, even if it is by the eternity of suicide. It is a fact that man is born to suffer in this world. But at the same time it is only suffering which can save us and it is only death that can end our suffering. Greene also believes that religion has the capacity to transform suffering into sanctification. Most of the protagonists of Greene's novels attain salvation through an agonizing struggle, dreadful suffering and through self-sacrifice, even being ready to the extent of committing suicide. The final self-sacrifice of Greene's characters - the whisky priest, Scobie and Sarah Miles -

represent the triumph of good over evil, by embracing death willingly for the sake of God, the Catholic Church and others. Three of these characters are assumed to have attained salvation and redemption through love, charity and self-sacrifice. Harvey Curtis Webster asserts in his essay "The world of Graham Greene" in Evans's collection of essays on Greene, "with a residual enlightenment about the horror of existence for those who live with minds alternately haunted by Heaven or Hell" (8).

The Heart of the Matter is a story of corruption suffered by a God-fearing and religious-minded man, Henry Scobie, who has been denied of his due promotion. His wife, Louise is hurt by this humiliation and escapes from that society to South Africa. The money he borrows for the passage of his wife puts him under an obligation undesirable for a government servant. He has a sense of responsibility to promote the happiness of others and gradually realizes that suffering is inevitable and inescapable. His efforts to arrange happiness for others result in suffering for him as well as for others. To Scobie, Helen, a nineteen year old widow from the torpedoed ship, is like an abandoned helpless child and out of pity he begins an affair with her. His predicament is a peculiar one, for he is tormented by his very love of human beings. Even though he finds it hard to give pain to any human beings, as a Catholic, he knows how to tackle his problems. He can make confession, repent and then avoid Helen. Unable to abandon Helen, he decides to commit suicide on an unjustifiable argument that by killing himself he will stop inflicting pain on Louise, Helen and God: "I can not desert either of them while I'm alive but I can die and remove myself from their blood stream. They are ill with me. And you, too, God – you are ill with me

. . . You will be better off if you lose me once and for all" (HM. 258). Marie-Beatrice Mesnet is right in her observation of Scobie's justification for committing suicide: "Scobie's ultimate fault is to believe that his sin is too great for God to forgive it. He cannot trust to the mercy of God. It is not Grace that has failed him but he who has failed to believe in Grace" (89). Just before committing suicide, Scobie feels the presence of God, "as though someone outside the room were seeking him, calling him, and he made a last effort to indicate that he was here" (HM. 265). While dying Scobie says aloud: "Dear God, I love . . ." (HM. 265). The judgment of Scobie's destiny after death is described at the end of the novel, in the conversation between Louise and Father Rank. When Louise expresses her belief of Scobie's damnation, Father Rank consoles her, talking about the 'appalling strangeness' of the mercy of God. He says: "It may seem an odd thing to say – when a man's as wrong as he was – but I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God" (HM. 272). From the words of Fr. Rank, it is believed that Scobie really loved God and God's mysterious ways are unknown to man. According to Greene it is assumed that Scobie has his own ways to attain salvation.

In the case of Scobie, Henry Donaghy remarks: "God has intervened and allowed Scobie time to repent of his original intention. This repentance in place of Greene's ambiguous ending, coupled with Scobie's virtuous response to duty, precludes tragedy" (61). Scobie's salvation is depicted in the intervention of God. Thus states Judith Adamson: "God comes to Scobie unexpectedly at the end, as He had come to the whisky priest" (153). David Lodge writes in his pamphlet justifying Scobie's suicide: "Unable to decide between hurting his wife, his mistress and God,

Scobie commits suicide – but, Greene reminds us, in one of those pregnant authorial asides which characterized his fiction at this period, “only the man of goodwill carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation”, and the ultimate fate of his soul is left open”. Greene has become accustomed to the idea of Original Sin and God’s mercy towards repentant sinners. B. P. Lamba observes Greene’s obsession with the concept of Divine mercy:

> He strives to show that God is loving and merciful and that till His grace sanctifies the sinful there cannot be any redemption. God has created this world with love and cannot permit this haven of love to be perverted . . . But man is weak and is inclined to evil and sin . . . He reflects both the sinful and saintly aspects, the mixture of good and evil that he happens to be. (64)

In *The Power and the Glory*, Greene has presented the theme of religious pursuit in a very powerful and effective manner. The protagonist of the novel, the whisky-priest, is an angst-ridden character, who is painfully aware of his own sinfulness. In fact, he is isolated by his vocation. When Coral asks him to renounce his faith, he replies: “It is impossible. There’s no way. I’m a priest. It’s out of my power” (PG. 40). The priest is full of repentance for his weaknesses as a human being. Similarly, the Biblical character, King David also is a model penitent for the sinful. Both the whisky priest and King David have unshakable faith in God. The priest is so humble that he dies for a noble cause and his death is actually self-sacrifice. He feels that he cannot deny hearing the confession of a dying man even if it leads him to lay

down his own life. Greene has a definite intention for contriving and including the arrest of the whisky priest while saving a damned man. His self-sacrifice is a sign of his devotion and the result of his suffering and love. Thus, the whisky priest becomes a martyr and is gradually transformed into a saint. According to Greene, the priest deserves sympathy and salvific grace of God, because of his sincere love and dedication to Christ. Francis L. Kunkel describes the characteristics of the priest, in R.O Evans's *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations*, under the title of his article, "The Theme of Sin and Grace in Graham Greene": "He never abandons himself to sin without a soul-tearing struggle, and he continually fights his bondage . . . . Greene does not glorify sin; he glorifies humility. The priest's love for Christ, like that of Peter the prototype of all priests, is not augmented by his betrayal but by the sorrow that ensues from the betrayal" (57-58). The whisky priest here is compared to Peter, one of the most loyal disciples of Jesus, in carrying out his duty faithfully. Like Peter, the whisky priest also undergoes severe spiritual struggles and thus makes compensation for his offense.

The priest in *The Power and the Glory* believes in the inevitability of pain and suffering and embraces his ultimate victory in death. Both the whisky priest and the lieutenant admire each other and the lieutenant realizes the greater value of the Catholic Church. When the new priest comes, it is the boy who welcomes him, out of great devotion. It is assumed that, this welcome to the priest opens the way to the power of God. This power of God symbolically is the sign of victory of the Church. As the title of the novel is from the final words of the Lord's prayer, "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever" (Mt. 6.13), the power and the glory

belong to God, whom the Church stands for.

Greene's novel, *The End of the Affair* also reveals the possibility of redemption and salvation through love and suffering. It is nothing but the divine intervention that ends the love-affair between Bendrix and Sarah. After the bomb-raid, Sarah seems to be under the influence of God. She refuses to make love with Bendrix and consoles him in a friendly manner: "You needn't be so scared. Love doesn't end. Just because we don't see each other . . . People go on loving God, don't they, all their lives without seeing him?" (EA. 54). Sarah's absence for two years makes Bendrix doubt about her new lover. It is only from her personal diary that Bendrix realizes the miraculous intervention of God in his life and the promise made by Sarah to God at the cost of their love-affair. Towards the end of the novel as the title suggests, their love-affair ends for ever and she submits herself entirely to God.

Sarah thereafter undergoes strong conflict between the flesh and the spirit. She feels that she has undergone a desert-experience – at the loss of their love-affair – which seems so painful to her. In fact, it appears to be a period of purgation on earth, though it is exceptional and unnatural. Sarah's sinful past is being purified thoroughly during this dark period of her life. She slowly comes to realize the eternal truth of Divine love and mercy and begins to enjoy the Heavenly Bliss as she opens herself up to God in a spirit of total submission. She finds extraordinary peace and joy within herself and experiences the Divine love and compassion for the first time in her life. Though she is torn between the temptations of the flesh and the spirit, she is forced to deepen her faith and begins to fall in love with God. In the Divine love she finds the

harmonious blend of human love and eternal love, mental agony and spiritual joy, sadness and delight and atonement and forgiveness all dovetailed into a new and single unity. In the beginning, Sarah appears to be an abject sinner without even a tinge of sanctity. In spite of all her sinful nature, Sarah's efforts to reach sainthood are rather magnificent and challenging. Her prolonged atonement, afflictions and sufferings, inner conflict and self-sacrifice are the various phases for her to attain salvation and experience purgatory here on earth itself for her sanctification. Through self-sacrifice, Sarah overcomes her human weaknesses and conquers the evil spirit by deepening her faith in God. Above all, God's Grace transforms her and sanctifies her in amazing ways as the *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* describes: "And God's grace is not content to save us from death by a gesture of acquittal, it extends generosity beyond all limit. Where sin proliferates, grace abounds more than ever. Without reserve it opens up the inexhaustible wealth of divine generosity and spreads it without counting the cost" (218-220).

In *The End of the Affair* Sarah Miles believes in the birth, crucifixion and death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to the Catholic faith, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ gives a new value to suffering and Sarah in the novel, refers to this when she prays to God:

> Dear God . . . If I could love you, I'd know how to love them. I believe the legend. I believe you were born. I believe you died for us. I believe You are God. Teach me to love. I don't mind my pain. It's their pain I can't stand. Let my pain go on and on, but stop theirs. Dear God, if only you could come down from your Cross for a while and let me get up there instead. If I

> could suffer like you, I could heal like you. (EA. 96)

Sarah's miraculous power of healing is manifested in the remaining part of the novel immediately after her death. When Richard Smythe, the atheist, complains against a God who had given him an ugly strawberry-mark at his birth, Sarah kisses the ugly mark on his cheek. Greene ventures to attribute a miraculous healing power to Sarah while she was still alive. The miraculous result of this incident is recorded in her diary, where she had a secret dialogue with God:

> I shut my eyes and put my mouth against the cheek. I felt sick for a moment because I fear deformity, and he sat quiet and let me kiss him, and I thought, I am kissing pain and pain belongs to You as happiness never does. I love You in Your pain. I could almost taste metal and salt in the skin, and I thought, How good You are. You might have killed us with happiness, but You let us be with You in pain. (EA. 98)

Sarah's willingness to accept any kind of pain from God is reflected in her own words, where she intercedes for Maurice Bendrix, her lover: "When I ask You for pain, You give me Peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace – he needs it more" (EA. 99).

As the thesis is a parallel study of Greene's fictional characters with corresponding Biblical models, their background, divine call, life situations, offences, repentance and atonements and their inner conflicts and sufferings to reach sanctification are compared and evaluated. All these aspects are evaluated in the light of the spiritual conflicts and sanctification of the selected characters in the novels as well as in the Bible. Three Biblical characters are selected as the models for analysis.

They all undergo and experience three stages of struggles such as mental, spiritual, and sublime, before reaching the heavenly bliss. The Bible characters selected as the models for analysis are Samson, the last judge of Israel and King David, the second King of Israel from the Old Testament and 'the sinful woman' of the Gospel according to Luke, from the New Testament. The introductory chapter serves the purpose of introducing the topic with special reference to the definitions of the concept of good and evil and a brief draft of the life and works of Greene along with the selected critical pieces on Greene.

The second chapter focuses on the mental agony of the characters in *The Heart of the Matter* and in the Holy Bible. The inner conflict of the fictional character Scobie is compared with that of Samson of the Old Testament. Both Scobie and Samson are similar in enduring the inner pain and agony as a result of their own fall as well as the fall of others. Scobie is ready to suffer and even damn himself in order to save others from their sufferings: "I can't make one of them suffer so as to save myself. I'm responsible and I'll see it through the only way I can" (HM. 259). Scobie commits suicide with the sole intention of keeping himself away from sin and sinful situations. He kills himself not to sin anymore against God by continuing his sinful ways. He dies himself not to offend Louise his wife, by keeping Helen as his mistress. He does not want to hurt Helen, his mistress anymore by leaving her alone in a miserable state. On the contrary, one finds Samson's deliberate self-killing is quite remarkable in the history of Israel. Samson's death is not a mere suicide as it has a meaningful dimension of sublimating it to the level of self-sacrifice with a view to achieving the mass assassination of Philistines, the enemies

of Israel.

Philistines are age-old enemies of Israelites; wherefore, Samson the last Judge of Israel is vengeful to the Philistines from his childhood itself. He is convinced of the special divine call on him to wipe them out, in order to establish the kingdom of God in Israel. But at the same time, his disobedience against God and his parents, by breaking the rules lead him to a pathetic state. Still God's mercy and Grace begin to work in him that his offences are forgiven and gradually, Samson attains sanctification through suffering.

There are a number of parallel situations in the lives of both Scobie and Samson. Also one finds many contrasting circumstances while evaluating these two lives. Scobie is only a member of the Catholic Church without any particular divine duty; whereas, Samson is born a Nazarite with a divine call to fight for Israel against the Philistines. Scobie proves his infidelity by committing adultery out of love and pity for Helen Rolt, a young widow. Similarly, Samson accepts a Philistine woman as his wife, violating the divine rule, which seems to be a terrible offence against God. Both Scobie and Samson end their lives with different intentions. Scobie ends his life for the peace and happiness of others and not to hurt and offend God anymore with his sinful life. On the contrary, Samson ends his life to wipe out the race of Philistines and to save Israel from their rivals, so to fulfill his divine duty. There are similarities and dissimilarities discussed in the chapter to evaluate and distinguish the kind of mental agony both Scobie and Samson suffered as part of their sanctification, in order to achieve divine mercy.

In the third chapter, the spiritual conflict of the whisky priest in Greene's

novel, *The Power and the Glory* is compared with that of King David, the second King of Israel. The spiritual conflicts experienced by the whisky priest and King David indicate the conflict between good and evil and the victory of good over evil. Having evaluated their spiritual conflicts, certain similar and dissimilar situations are found in their lives. Since both the characters have different backgrounds - fictional and Biblical - it is quite natural to find many distinctive differences. Yet there are a number of situations, where they seem to be similar in nature, like their Divine Call, responsibility, personal weaknesses, nature of repentance, fidelity to God and to their official duties and, lastly, regarding the presence of their successors at the end of their life. The spiritual conflicts of both the characters are analyzed in this study and it is found that suffering is inevitable for any one to reach sanctification.

It should be reascertained here that no reader of *The Power and the Glory* can eschew the delicate feelings of pathos, sympathy and solidarity with and towards the whisky priest, while going through the pages where Greene depicts vividly the situations like the rejection by Maria and his illegitimate daughter Bridgetta and the critical moment of his betrayal while giving the last Sacraments to a dying man. One will be almost impelled to join in chorus with the *Kenosis* Hymn of Apostle Paul and sing in favour of the whisky priest: “[Being in the priestly ministry] and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death . . . wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him” (Phil. 2.8-9a). If too staunch and orthodox theologians may launch complaints and brand these words of mine as sacrilegious, I will refute and argue that the power and the glory of the Church rely on the *kenotic* or self-emptying sacrifices like that of the whisky priest, which should not

be

obliterated.

The fourth chapter assesses the Celestial Bliss that the heroine Sarah Miles enjoys at the end of her life in Greene's *The End of the Affair*. It is a parallel study of the spiritual conflicts of Sarah Miles and 'the sinful woman' in the Gospel according to St. Luke, before reaching the state of supernatural peace and joy when they are alive. Towards the end of the novel, one may find Sarah Miles sitting in a corner of the Church and enjoying the divine presence after her total surrender to God. After the miracle of Bendrix's returning to life, Sarah is convinced of the miraculous presence of God in her life and so she is filled with love and gratitude. Though she has become so weak in health, she is strong in her decision to fulfill her private vow and enjoys inner peace and heavenly joy. Similarly, the 'sinful woman' also finds her refuge at the feet of Jesus, as she is overwhelmingly filled up with love for Jesus and sorrow for her sins. She tries to express the immense love she carries in her heart. As Jesus declares, she loves more because she is forgiven more. Her great love proves that her many sins are forgiven. By giving forgiveness, Jesus sanctifies the 'sinful woman'. God also forgives Sarah Miles in *The End of the Affair* and she begins to receive the miraculous power of Jesus. Cedric Watts comments: "Sarah makes a wager with God that if He will save her lover's life, she will abandon the adulterous affair; and the life is saved; and thereafter she becomes a miracle-worker" (95).

God converts Sarah from a sinner to a saint and transforms her as a miracle-worker. Both Sarah and the 'sinful woman' are forgiven by God and are sanctified through their sufferings and spiritual conflicts. Both Sarah Miles and the 'sinful

woman' enjoy the Celestial Bliss here on earth itself before their death. In the novel, Sarah renounces Bendrix and enjoys Celestial Bliss, surrendering herself to God. The 'sinful woman' also enjoys inner peace and joy at the feet of Jesus forsaking everything else in the world. While making the parallel study on the process of sanctification of Sarah and the 'sinful woman', it is observed that God is merciful to the whole mankind and it is the responsibility of everyone to receive His mercy, love and grace into their lives, shunning away from the sham pleasure of the world.

Greene's characters commit sin, since they are too weak to resist the worldly temptations; but, in the battlefield of good and evil, they have ardent desire to overcome evil with good. As B. P.Lamba asserts:

> The fall in Greene's fiction is because of the limitations and subsequent frustrations of these weak, sinful, but potentially good men . . . It is the whisky priest, Scobie the just, and Sarah the harlot-turned saint, whose lives represent a sharper and profounder vision. They discover the healing touch of God and Grace when they are in the heart of darkness. (64)

It is obvious for the weak and the fallen men to believe that they too can hope for redemption through suffering. As St. Paul asserts in his Epistle to Romans, man does evil against his own will: "So I find this law at work: when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members" (Rom. 7.21-23). Thomas Merton's words are most befitting ones in this connection: " . . . by the free

wills of men, the human race can still recover, each time, and can still produce men and women who overcome evil with good, hatred with love, greed with charity, lust and cruelty with sanctity" (*The Seven Storey Mountain,* 159).

There are murder cases, mass murder, sex abuse, chaos and confusion everywhere in the world. There is sinful luxury in sharp contrast with abject poverty in the world. There are screams of delight and agony of the friendly and unfriendly gatherings. But, there are saints walking with sinners in the novels of Greene. And the sinners are getting transformed and sanctified through the process of suffering and purgatory as they undergo certain inner struggles and spiritual conflicts in their worldly life. On the contrary, one may find suicide, martyrdom, total surrender to God and total sacrifice for the sake of others, in the novels of Greene.

Sin, repentance grace, redemption and salvation are all themes on which the Church has definite stances. The Church teaches that a person dying in a state of mortal sin will be doomed to the damnation of hellfire. Suicide is a mortal sin and no staunch Catholic can ever believe that Scobie will go to heaven as he committed suicide. Greene has stirred up a hornet's nest by the implied sanctification of Scobie. Greene has his own explanation for the compassion of a merciful God towards fallen men. No theologian has been, is or will be able to estimate the magnanimity and compassion of God. God's ways are inscrutably mysterious and beyond human reasoning, logic or syllogism. It is believed that God is love and if nothing is possible to man, everything is possible to God with His eternal love. Jesus admitted the good

thief into Paradise just because of his last minute repentance. His life-long iniquities were pardoned in a fraction of a second. Jesus even prayed for his persecutors and murderers. As he was hanging on the cross flanked by two thieves, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke. 23.34). It is certain that the prayer of Jesus will not go unanswered. It would mean that the people, who crucified Jesus, too might find a place in the Paradise because the mercy of God is so wide-ranging and all-embracing. Greene seems to say that no sinner, however depraved he might have been, has no cause to despair because God's compassion is so vast and immense. Theologians might distinguish mortal sins and venial sins, but they hardly know a thing about God's compassion and how far it can go and what kind of people it can embrace.

Greene's portrayal of the characters and their physical, mental and spiritual struggle has given him worldwide reputation, for most of his novels deal with modern man's struggles and conflicts. As a sign of the International recognition, Graham Greene was named the "Commander of Arts and Letters" by France in 1984. When he died in 1991, at the age of 86, his reputation as a great "Catholic" writer was unquestionably assured. Truly and undoubtedly, his books reflected an awareness of human weakness and propensity to sin and they dealt with discomfiting themes with a subtle, sublime and sombre eye. He successfully produced a gallery of shabby human beings as his characters, but all of them forcefully or spontaneously demanding the readers' empathy and even sympathy. In the three novels selected for this study - *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* – Greene exposes himself to be a moralist troubled by human turpitude and evil in our time.

Greene tried to advocate a special type of subjective morality prying deep into the abysmal depths of the internal struggles between good and evil undergone by the psyches of human, very human characters. And his gift was to locate the moment of crisis when a character loses faith, religious or otherwise, and life is exposed in all its drab wonder. This close-knit analysis of the human inclination for evil meticulously combining it with the perennial reality of God's salutary grace renders Greene's novels their special charm and persuasive appeal. Greene creates a world that is dark from whose depths emerges the redemptive power of the divine love. God's mercy, his compassion, is infinite, much beyond the human comprehension.

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