

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 jealousy 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.

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 *Psalms 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.

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.