

## Chapter V

### Conclusion

For goodness' sake . . . don't imagine you - or - I know a thing about God's mercy . . . The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart.

- Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* (272)

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

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

to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

belong to God, whom the Church stands for.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

of

Israel.

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

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

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

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

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

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obliterated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

wills

of

men,

the

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

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

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

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

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

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