insight into the attributes of God depicted by Greene deepens the faith of every man and enables him to cope with the challenges involved in day to day life. The more he experiences the power of God which has multi-dimensions, the more he can lead a morally good life and render his contribution to make this world a better place to live in.

Chapter 6

6. SUMMATION

It is quite appropriate to state that Greene is a novelist with a vision that man should be able to grasp the essentials of spiritual values. His religious novels are allegories clothed in melodrama. The story in them is told on two levels – secular or physical and religious or spiritual. Even when the story is narrated on the physical level, it has definite spiritual undertones. He is a commendable writer who constructs his plots in such a way that they are successful in presenting the story on both the levels. In an effort to give a clear picture about the indispensable components of spiritual experience, Greene has touched upon the issues such as suffering, sacrifice, salvation and other attributes of God in his novels. The distinctive feature of his writings is that they project his perceptions of spiritual matters in an engaging manner.

After having read all the religious novels of Greene, one can gain an insight into the fact that the manner in which Greene has touched upon spiritual matters in his novels is so fascinating that no reader can keep himself from being drenched in mysticism. His primary aim
is to draw the attention of the readers in such a way that the plots concerning even religious themes appear to be attractive. Honestly speaking, the talk about spiritual values in literature is not that appealing to the contemporary readers. Since modern man finds the spiritual values uninteresting, a writer cannot afford to leave it completely with an intention of gratifying a common man. What a good writer has to do is that he must change his writing style to such an extent as to be able to draw the attention of the readers towards the aspects of spiritual values which are not in the limelight. What Greene has done is that he has adopted a new technique so as to draw the attention of the readers towards the spiritual matters. It is a major breakthrough because even the people who are not interested in religious issues find the writings of Greene interesting and appealing to their soul.

In order to inculcate spiritual values in the minds of the readers, Greene has used romance, violence, cold-blooded murder, breach of trust and lust for power and money as the major components. By way of giving a portrait of secular matters, he has caused the readers to understand how essential the spiritual values are. Even a man, who has a strong aversion to spiritual matters, realizes the fact that the spiritual values are absolutely essential to lead a happy life. In *The End of the Affair* there is an eminent novelist called Bendrix who has attained popularity by virtue of his impressive writings. He is not a believer in God. Rather, he is an atheist and lover of pleasure. He causes Sarah to get entangled in the web of adultery with him.

Being touched by the love of God, Sarah puts an end to her secret affair with Bendrix. At one stage, Bendrix is exceedingly angry with both God and Sarah as he is not able to continue to enjoy his courtship with the latter. But towards the end, he turns out to be a believer. One of the recurring themes in the novels of Greene is that life of man is absolutely meaningless if he has no faith in God. In order to understand the genuine meaning of life man has to put his trust in God
and make Him an integral part of his life. Greene makes the readers understand the fact that sin is the major barrier that blocks the way that leads man towards God. He has taken an enormous amount of pain to portray the evil effects of sin. What one can understand is that no other writer in literature has given as a vivid picture as Greene has given. If a soldier wants to defeat his enemy in the battlefield, it is absolutely imperative for him to know his weakness. This will serve as a tool for him to defeat his enemy quite easily. Greene projects sin as the spiritual enemy of every man who should be routed. If a man is aware of the seducing power of sin, he can be alert and keep himself spiritually sound. But failing to understand the power of sin will result in terrible consequences.

The sole aim of Greene is to depict the multi-dimensional effect of sin in his novels so that the readers will have awareness about its destructive power and flee from it. The artistic talent of Greene lies in the fact that he gives the portrait of the seven deadly sins such as pride, anger, envy, impurity, gluttony, slothfulness and avarice in his religious novels. A mere superficial reading of the novels cannot help the readers to understand the hidden truths pertaining to sin. A profound reading will serve as an eye-opener to know that the seven deadly sins are condemned in many places in his novels either literally or symbolically. Greene shows that pride may take different kinds of forms. It may pertain to spiritual, intellectual, material or social. Spiritual pride is found in the life of Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*. Being called ‘Scobie the just’, he has a sense of over confidence regarding his being upright. Greene makes it pretty clear that when a man is over confident about his moral status, he is sure to encounter his downfall one day or other.

There is decay in the moral life of Scobie, owing to his spiritual arrogance. Talking about intellectual pride, Greene quotes the life of the lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory*, who is
skeptical. He reckons that he is superior to others in terms of knowledge. His philosophy of rationalism is an obstacle that restricts him from experiencing God’s love. Greene highlights the fact that unless a man humbles himself by getting rid of his pride, he can never experience God’s love. The life of the lieutenant teaches a lesson to the readers that a man who is arrogant and is skeptical can no way experience the divine love. Skepticism is a great hurdle to any person who aspires to become a spiritual man. Another form of pride Greene talks about is material pride. If a man has an enormous amount of wealth, he is prone to be puffed up with pride. As a result, he can neither regard man nor God. Doctor Fischer in *The Bomb Party* lives in a great white mansion. He has a tremendous quantity of wealth, which has blinded his eyes to know that human relationship is more important than accumulating the riches. Being proud of his wealth, he is not able to maintain a good interpersonal relationship even with his wife and daughter.

Greene shows the readers that material pride can cause man to develop a strong hatred towards his fellow men. It destroys the cordial relationship of a family and creates a rift between one another. When a man is boastful about his financial status like Doctor Fischer in *The Bomb Party* he can hardly think about his spiritual need. Doctor Fischer stays focused on increasing his wealth. The readers are made to understand that people who are proud about their financial position can never experience the peace of God. Material possession alone cannot give happiness to man. Despite the fact that money is essential, it is not the main criterion for happy living. What Greene shows from the character of Fischer is that when a man is obsessed with money, he feels that there is no need for him to seek God. He reckons that his abundant wealth will provide him happiness. Wealth can give comfort to man but not happiness he is hunting for. What one can understand from the life of Fischer is that happiness does not lie in the possession what one has. Instead, it is found in God. The second of the seven deadly sins is anger which has a
destructive power. Anger prompts a person to take revenge upon his enemy. When Kite in *Brighton Rock* is killed, Pinkie becomes exceedingly angry. He plans to take revenge upon Hale by murdering him, because of his burning anger. Greene reminds the readers that if anger is not nipped in the bud itself, it will bring about terrible consequences. Anger has got a tremendous power to devastate, mutilate and destroy.

The third of the seven deadly sins is envy which splits human relationships and causes murders. Maurice Bendrix in *The End of the Affair* is envious to the core. Greene reminds of the fact that a man who is envious cannot tolerate his fellow man being happy. When Henry and Sarah lead a blissful married life, he grows envious about their cordial relationship. He entices Sarah with his soothing words and uses her to gratify his carnal desires. When she quits her secret affair with Bendrix and turns out to be a lover of God, the latter grows enormously envious. His envy does not allow him to live in a state of happiness. He makes her life by following her wherever she goes with a sense of suspicion that she has developed a secret affair with somebody. Greene shows the readers that any envious man can never be a well-wisher of others. The heart of such a man is full of hatred towards others. A man of envious character can no way experience the divine peace which is beyond man’s intellectual power. Envy has malicious nature to hurt others and the sadistic pleasure in taunting others. People with envy cannot experience God’s love because they are always under the influence of discontentment. Instead of being grateful to God for all the good things they enjoy in their life, they look at the good things of others and envy them.

Talking about the fourth of the seven deadly sins, which is impurity, he highlights how people invite trouble upon themselves by committing the sin of adultery. Today many of the contemporary writers project sex outside marriage as fun. Not many writers show the terrible
consequences of adultery in their writings. But Greene, being a committed novelist makes it a point to give caution to the readers about immorality. The primary objective of a writer is not just to entertain the readers. They should also write in such a way that their writings contribute to the moral life of people. It is quite apparent that adultery is a sin which has broken many families down through the ages. Greene indirectly reminds the readers of the fact that the institution of marriage is a sacrament ordained by God. Any relationship outside marriage in the form of adultery is worthy of condemnation. When a man is carried away by the momentary pleasure involved in adultery, he misses the golden opportunity of having a normal, healthy sex and vibrant family life. Adultery breeds moral decay and human degradation in the society. Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, Sarah in *The End of the Affair* and the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* reap the terrible consequences of adultery.

Sarah is a married woman. Scobie is a police officer while the whisky priest is a Vicar. These three people belong to different ethnic groups but they invariably commit adultery which results in their loss of peace. Greene hints that no man under the sun is too infallible to be affected by the physical pleasures of adultery. It is by the grace of God that one can keep himself pure from being defiled by it. The amount of suffering Sarah, Scobie and the Whisky priest face reminds the readers of the fact that adultery may give pleasure that lasts only for a short span of time. But its consequences will be exceedingly painful. He warns the readers to be cautious of the sexual temptations which may hurl them down into depths of the sea of sin. Greene is not only a religious writer but also a social reformer whose aim is to caution the married people to keep their married life pure. They should close the door to anything lustful or illicit that seeks to encroach upon them. There is no greater joy than to find a couple remaining loyal to each other all through their lives. Every episode pertaining to immorality in the novels of Greene makes it
pretty clear that adultery shatters the happy family to pieces. Married people ought to be exceedingly vigilant lest they are trapped by this sin.

When one analyzes the character of Scobie in The Heart of the Matter, one can gain some insights into the essentials of spiritual values. If he had remained loyal to his wife by not committing adultery with Helen, he would not have faced any chaos in his life. He would not have jumped to a wrong conclusion that committing suicide was the only remedy to his mental agony. Things would have been entirely different in his life, if he had dared to say ‘no’ to the illicit relationship with Helen. Greene suggests that purity in moral life is the most important aspect of man’s life which can preserve not only his family but also the society in which he lives. As long as a married person does not give room for extra-marital affair, he can preserve the serenity of his family. Once a relationship creeps into a family in the form of adultery it will destroy the sanctity of the whole family. This is what Greene talks about in The Heart of the Matter. He is very particular that priests in the church should be a role model before their congregation. Unless they remain holy they can never bring about any change in their church. The whisky priest in The Power and the Glory brings disgrace to God by having developed an illicit relationship with a lady called Maria. Despite the fact that he sticks to his commitment of being a priest amidst tribulation, he does not cause revival to occur in the places where he serves as a priest. The reason is that he is a lover of pleasure. No revival occurs in the lives of people. At this juncture Greene shows that if a shepherd goes astray, his sheep also will certainly go astray. His primary concern is that the priest should be above reproach. Otherwise they can never be a channel of blessings to His congregation.

Talking about gluttony which is the fifth of the seven deadly sins, Greene shows that when a man eats a great deal or drinks much, it will harm his body, dulls his mind and defiles his
soul. In *The Power and the Glory* the priest is an addict to brandy. Greene vehemently attacks those who are not able to control their worldly desires. Drinking brandy is a blot on the character of the whisky priest. Instead of spreading the fragrance of God’s love in the Mexican city he brings only disgrace to God’s name. Greene satirizes the fake priests who bring disgrace to the name of God and spoil the image of the church. Next he deals with sloth. Wasting the God-given resources by remaining lazy is worthy of condemnation. Greene explains how a lazy man gets entangled in the web of sin. The whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* slips and falls into the sin of adultery primarily and because of the fact that he is slothful to the core. Being a priest, he ought to make use of his time to reach out to the people with the message of salvation. But because of his laziness he spoils his own reputation and brings disgrace to the name of God. Greene gives awareness about the terrible consequences of being slothful and thereby cautions the readers against remaining lazy around.

Dealing with avarice, the last of the seven deadly sins Greene enables the readers to gain an insight into the fact that the heart of man never attains satisfaction however rich he is. In order to substantiate it Greene cites an example from the life of Doctor Fischer in *The Bomb-party*. Doctor Fischer is an eminent business man who has a tremendous amount of wealth. Yet there is a sense of discontentment in his heart since he continues to yearn for more money. The people who are invited to a party by Doctor Fischer are also greedy. His life ends on a note of hopelessness. Greene makes it clear that money alone cannot give peace to man. People who are materialistic can hardly have any spiritual contentment. Mestizo in *The Power and the Glory* and Pinkie in *Brighton Rock* are greedy through and through. As a result, they loose sight of the spiritual values which are essential. The readers are made to understand that wealth cannot stay with man permanently. According to Greene, contentment is the key to a happy living. If a man
is satisfied with what he has, he can lead a happier life than anybody else in this world. A man who is money minded can never maintain a cordial relationship with his fellow man. He cannot even love his own family members. Doctor Fischer is one of the wealthiest men of his time. But he is unable to love his own wife or daughter. His primary goal is to get richer and richer. Being interested in social concern Greene says emphatically that man should not be self-centered. Instead he must be a well-wisher of others. In order to get rid of avarice man should shift his focus from selfish motives to social concern.

Besides touching upon the issue related to the seven deadly sins, Greene also talks about other sins such as self-righteousness, unholy attitude towards marriage, intention of committing suicide, taking part in the Holy Communion with any sin of remorse and denying the very existence of God. The people, who commit the above sins, find themselves in a miserable condition towards the end of their lives. It gives the evidence of the fact that a man who violates God’s commandment is sure to lead a sorrowful life. Sin is the destroyer of man’s happiness. A pious man should shun all forms of evil in this world and make it his priority to love righteous deeds. Greene’s indirect exhortation to the readers is that they should follow spiritual values by getting rid of sins which may play wreck with their lives.

Greene’s greatness lies in the fact that he gives a vivid picture of the prevalent sins committed by the people living in the present age. It is his major concern that people should have a clear understanding about sin which contains a destructive force and keep themselves unspotted. It attracts people by giving momentary pleasure and enslaves those who get indulged in it. By virtue of narrating the thrilling stories, Greene has made the readers understand the danger involved in sinful pleasures. One of the notable features in his novels is that he has nowhere literally condemned the sinful acts. His remarkable skill lies in the fact that he has
depicted the life of sinners and provided an access for the readers to be aware of the consequences of sins. Instead of propagating moral values directly, he just leaves it to the readers to comprehend the difference between the sinful life and the righteous life and the consequences involved in them. After having witnessed the sufferings of the sinners, no one will dare to justify sin. The suffering and pain involved in sin give the implication that sin is a terrible thing and no sin, no matter how pleasurable for the moment, is worth the consequences. In order to lead one’s life triumphantly, one should be extra-cautious about the seducing pleasures of sin and keep oneself pure.

After having given a vivid picture of sin, Greene hints how one can get deliverance from its bondage. Moral failure is never final for a man until he succumbs to it. A man who has failed in his moral life can bounce back and make a fresh start to lead a righteous life so long as there is a sense of repentance and the feeling of guilt. Greene guides his readers to the realization of the Biblical concept of God’s forgiveness which is beyond limit. Forgiveness is a unique topic which Greene deals with in his religious novels. The reason is that it has a close link with his personal life. When he had spiritual problems, he was under the bondage of mental agony. He had a wrong notion that committing suicide was the only remedy to his problem. When Father Trollope expounded God’s forgiving love, it persuaded him to make a personal commitment to trust in God completely. There after a transformation occurred in his life. After having experienced the forgiveness of sins, which is a God-given gift, he wants his readers also to experience it. He is of the view that no sin is too big for God to forgive. A sinner need not perish by leading a miserable life devoid of any hope.

With a primary objective of substantiating God’s forgiving love, he projects all his protagonists as morally weak to the core. It is obvious that sinners have outnumbered the saints
in his novels. It is likely that one may have a misconception about Greene that he writes in support of the sinners. But he does not support the sinners at all. He by all means wants his readers to comprehend the truth that God is rich in His mercy and forgives whatever sins man is capable of committing. His philosophy is that God can accomplish a life-changing transformation to all who put their trust in Him and confess their sins. According to him, even if a man prays to God and asks for forgiveness of sins with a little bit of faith, he will be saved. A sinner with a little bit of faith in God is far better than an atheist in Greene’s sight. It is the sinner who realizes the need for salvation. The atheists never care about salvation. A man who wants to obtain salvation should do two important things. First, he has to repent of his sinful deeds then confess the same to God. Greene proves that confession is the gateway to salvation.

In *The Power and the Glory* the whisky priest brings disgrace to the name of God by committing adultery with Maria. In addition to that he is an addict to brandy. His guilty conscience always pricks him. Being haunted by his guilt, he acknowledges the fact that there is still a glimmer of hope for him if he just prays to God by confessing his sins. Despite his moral failures, his lips constantly plead with God to pardon all his sins. When he expresses his sorrow about the sins he has committed, God is gracious enough to forgive him and bestow salvation on him. Greene underlines the truth that anyone who cries to God with broken-heartedness can become a recipient of God’s forgiveness. Sin is surmountable if one completely surrenders oneself to God. Humility is one of the notable characteristic features of the whisky priest. He is never boastful of anything. Whenever he prays to God he openly tells Him how unworthy he is. Greene brings it to the notice of the readers that God never rejects the prayers offered in humility. The submissive nature of the whisky priest is a driving force for him to turn to be a man of broken and contrite heart. According to Greene, salvation is free but not cheap. The only
condition that God requires is repentance coupled with humility. The Whisky priest possesses all sorts of immoral characteristics. Yet, he becomes the recipient of God’s mercy because he humbles himself before Him.

Another important aspect with regard to forgiveness is the realization of one’s helplessness. A man who wants to be saved should admit that he cannot save himself and God alone can save him. The whisky priest acknowledges the fact that he has no ability to save himself from the bondage of sin. He knows for sure that he needs a saviour to redeem him from the clutches of sins. The whisky Priest is presented as a recipient of God’s mercy primarily because he realizes his helplessness and puts his complete trust in God who alone can save man from his wretched life. Greene says emphatically that apart from trusting God man can no way obtain salvation. In order to attain salvation man need not necessarily observe any rites or ceremonies. All he has to do is to have a genuine sorrow over his sinful deeds and turn from them. Greene makes it perfectly clear that the good works of a man cannot enable him to be a recipient of God’s forgiving love. It is only by God’s grace that man can be saved. When a man receives forgiveness of sins, an amazing change takes place in him. He receives not only eternal peace but also the hope of life after death.

After having confessed all his sins to God, the whisky priest has the assurance that he will spend his eternity in heaven with God. This hope causes him to be exceedingly courageous to encounter his death. When he is on the verge of being executed, there is not even an iota of fear found in his countenance. Greene shows the readers that a man who has the assurance of salvation need not be scared of death. Generally speaking the thing which constantly frightens invariably all men in this world is death. But the life of the whisky priest prompts the readers to gain an understanding that everyone who has experienced the forgiveness of sins can stay calm
at the time of death. Death may decay their body but not their soul. Their soul will reach heaven with God.

Sarah in *The End of the Affair* has got entangled in the web of adultery. It is a terrible sin and the most detestable one in the sight of God. If a man is caught red-handed in the act of adultery, the society will have constant aversion towards him. But in the sight of Greene, even the adulterers can be the recipient of God’s mercy if they confess their sins to God. The point that he makes is that God’s love is so boundless that it cannot leave any sinner unforgiving. Faith is the key to experiencing God’s forgiving love. Sarah believes Christ died for her sins and so she could go to Him and obtain forgiveness. The first change that occurs in her life after having obtained forgiveness is everlasting peace which fills her empty soul and she becomes a new creation. Her attitude towards life gets completely changed. She no longer longs for passing pleasures of sins. She puts an end to her affair she had been maintaining with Bendrix. The portrait of Sarah’s life highlights the fact that as soon as God forgives a sinner, his life completely undergoes a change in every sphere. The things he used to do he would no longer do. God alone can bring forth such marvelous changes in the life of a sinner. Greene shows that as soon as a sinner is saved by the grace of God, the manner in which he leads his life will be entirely different and reflect God’s forgiving love. When Bendrix comes close to her once again, she does not allow him to entice her. She wants to show him that God has saved her and she would no longer be the kind of person she used to be.

If a person continues to commit the same sins, he used to commit over and over again after experiencing the forgiveness of sins it means he is not saved at all. In other words he is still under the bondage of sins. Unless he leads a righteous life by practicing good virtues he will still be under the clutches of sins. Even though Sarah gets many opportunities to get back to her
former sinful life she is steadfast in her commitment to lead a sin-free life. In order to heighten the concept of God’s forgiving love, Greene uses the character of Scobie. If his life is analyzed from the reader’s perspective he is worthy to be condemned. Since he has committed suicide there is no way his soul can be saved by the redeeming power of God. Yet, Greene projects him as one who deserves God’s mercy. At this point of time the readers should not pass a wrong judgment concerning Greene that he justifies the suicidal act. Greene uses Father Rank as his mouth piece to proclaim the truth that God’s mercy is so boundless that one cannot measure it. Therefore, no one under the sun has the authority to condemn a sinner, however great his sins are. Human mind cannot perceive what goes on in the inner most part of a sinner’s heart. Even though Scobie has committed suicide, there might have been chances for him to have prayed to God just before his last breath.

In *Brighton Rock*, Greene projects God as one who is hunting for human love. God always goes after a sinner as a shepherd goes in search of a lost sheep. Pinkie and Rose have completely gone away from God. Despite the fact that they were adhering to spiritual values early in their life, their present life is ungodly to the core. Though their zeal in the spiritual matters has completely vanished, God’s loving hand keeps following them wherever they go. It gives the implication that God’s forgiving love is unconditional. Even though the life of Pinkie ends on a sad note, Greene presents him as another recipient of God’s forgiving love. A priest explains God’s boundless mercies by quoting the life of a French man named Charles Peguy, who was considered to be an unpardonable sinner. In spite of his sinful deeds, he receives forgiveness from God. Therefore, Pinkie too can be worthy of receiving God’s forgiving love. The song “Agnus Dei qui tollis” which is sung quite frequently by Pinkie is one of the most important aspects of the novel. Since Christ died for the sins of the world, there is no need for
anyone to die without any hope. His Blood can wash one’s sins thoroughly and fill his soul with everlasting joy. Salvation is a gift of God offered to any sinner who realizes his unworthiness. Whoever rejects this gift is bound to live in this world without any hope like Doctor Fischer. Whoever humbles himself before God and receives the gift of salvation can stay secure in this world and can look forward to the glorious lives in heaven.

The gift of salvation makes the believers stay happy in all the circumstances. Even in the midst of bleak situations, the believers can sustain their faith alive. Greene shows that as soon as a sinner experiences the forgiveness of sins the journey of his life does not end there itself. His life goes through the next phase. He must prepare himself to surmount the trials and temptations that come on his way every day. A godly life is not a bed of roses. It is an amalgamation of both joys and sorrows. The novels of Greene provide ample proof that no godly man can lead a suffering free life in this world. God allows sufferings in the life of His children to mould them and make them mature in their faith. When gold is put into fire, it becomes purer than ever before and ready for making beautiful ornaments. In spite of the fact that the process of purification is painful, it produces a wonderful result. Similarly, the sufferings of the righteous man make him better.

Greene purposefully allows his protagonists to go through the path of sufferings so that their lives will teach many lessons to the readers about the value of suffering and sacrifice. The point he makes in his novels is that suffering is a blessing in disguise for the godly people. Those who set their mind on heavenly things can afford to endure any sort of sufferings in this world. They can gain an insight into the fact that suffering is only temporal. It is through the eyes of faith that one can learn the benefits of sufferings. The whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*, Sarah in *The End of the Affair*, Querry in *A Burnt-out Case* and Scobie in *The Heart of the
Matter never grow dejected while meeting painful circumstances in their lives. The divine
manifestation of the glory of suffering and sacrifice enables them to hold on to their faith in the
face of heart-breaking situations.

Looking at the character of whisky priest in The Power and the Glory, the readers can
understand that suffering is an integral part of Christian virtues. The more a person suffers the
more he can gain spiritually. The whisky priest has an enormous amount of courage to carry out
his missionary work in Mexico even though he knows about the risks involved in it. Mexico is a
state wherein all sorts of religious works are strictly forbidden. As per the government ordinance
the moment a person is caught in the act of getting involved in religious work he will
immediately be imprisoned. Eventually he ought to be executed. Despite the threatening
punishment the whisky priest makes up his mind to preach the gospel in the Mexican state. He
knows pretty well that unless he takes up his cross and follows God he cannot be a disciple to
Him. Cross is a symbol of suffering. Yet, he volunteers himself to carry the cross and accomplish
the mission work. It is a well known fact for him that one day or other he will be caught and
executed. The fear of death does not stop him from getting involved in his priestly duty. He is
bold enough to face anything that comes on his way. He considers himself a soldier for Christ.

The government of Mexico has entrusted the responsibility of catching hold of the
whisky priest into the hands of the lieutenant. His photograph is published in the Newspaper so
that if anyone comes across him he will inform this to the lieutenant. Thus, all possible
arrangements have been made to catch him by any means. But as for the whisky priest, he is not
at all scared about the death sentence. It is his faith that the moment he dies he will go to heaven.
Greene makes the readers understand that for a godly man death is not an end itself. Knowing
about the hope of life after death the whisky priest travels far and wide in Mexico for the purpose
of preaching God’s love. The believers in Mexico are also very familiar with the fact that the
government will impose severe punishment upon them if they are caught in the act of
entertaining the whisky priest. Yet, they are prepared to suffer. This shows their hunger for
spiritual food. Wherever the priest goes, people who believe in God receive him with warmth of
love and make arrangement for mass. The priest is even able to conduct the Holy Communion
service clandestinely because of the help rendered by the believers in Mexico. The manner in
which people support the priest displays their courageous spirit to endure any form of sufferings
for the sake of God.

In order to make the readers understand the benefits of sufferings Greene portrays the life
of the whisky priest who has kept focused on the heavenly things. He knows pretty well that life
in this world is only temporary whereas the life after death is eternal. He wants to work for
eternal investment. Whenever he meets people he exhorts them to suffer more for the sake of
God. He talks about the ultimate joy that awaits in heaven for the believers and encourages them
to be firm in their faith in the face of sufferings. His philosophy of life is that suffering should
never diminish one’s faith. As soon as man breathes his last in this world the pain involved in
suffering will just vanish. The moment the believer gets into heaven all his sorrows will
disappear. The hope of eternal life can give any believer the required strength to tolerate the
temporal sufferings of this world.

Greene is also of the opinion that only those who believe in God can have the assurance
of the eternal life in heaven. People who have no faith in God will look down upon those who
talk about heaven. The life of lieutenant is a perfect example for it. According to him, everyone
who believes in eternity is a fool. The very talk about heaven infuriates him. The philosophy of
lieutenant is that as long as a man lives in this world he should lead a care free life without
bothering about eternity. As Greene talks about the glory of sufferings, his main objective is that the readers must be able to comprehend the truth that only those who have the assurance of eternal life in heaven can lead a meaningful life in this world. People having faith in eternal life do not lose heart when sufferings assail them. When death nears them they do not become panic. Instead they encounter their death with joy because they know that death is not a sad end for a believer in God. But for an unbeliever, death is a hopeless end and so he cannot embrace it happily.

Greene also points out that sometimes the believers cannot understand the purpose of suffering with their limited knowledge. It is inevitable that at times suffering comes to the believers also in the form of disappointment. When the whisky priest leaves the house of Fellows, he comes across a child who remains unconscious. He has been hit by a bullet. When his condition is highly critical, the priest tries his level best to save him. Yet, the child dies. The mother of the child acknowledges God as one who can perform the miracles even in seemingly hopeless situation. The whisky priest also expects that God will perform a miracle in the child’s life and raise him from the dead. But his expectation does not come true. In this episode, Greene shows that the ways of God to man are unfathomable. One thing which is understandable is that God allows sufferings and disappointments in a believer’s life to mould him. The more he suffers the more he grows in his faith.

Another spiritual truth that Greene highlights is that those who live close to God suffer more than those who are far away from God. When Sarah in *The End of the Affair* leads an immoral life, she does not face any form of suffering. But the moment she puts an end to her affair with Bendrix, countless sufferings start to assail her. When Sarah leads a new life by giving up her sinful deeds, Bendrix is not able to tolerate it. He continues to follow her wherever
she goes and tortures her. When she goes to the church, he comes there with an intention of bringing her back to his fold. But Sarah is firm in her holy life. He even suspects her and spreads a rumour she carries an affair with someone else. As a matter of fact, her new lover is none other than God. Even though she pleads with him to leave her he refuses to do so. Even at this juncture Sarah remains calm by enduring the suffering of mental torture.

She encounters another form of suffering. Because of her physical infirmity she dies as a young girl. Her untimely death may prompt the readers to question God as to why He has allowed her to die at the tender age. No human mind can find an answer to this. The indirect answer that Greene provides to the readers is that God allows his children to walk through the valley of shadow of death. Yet, nothing can harm them. Being a repented sinner Sarah will definitely spend her eternity in heaven. Just as in the case of the whisky priest, Sarah is also considered a saint by the people. God uses her life as an instrument to bring about transformation in the life of an atheist called Symthe who used to preach against Christianity. The suffering that Sarah underwent has not gone in vain.

In *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie the protagonist undergoes a series of sufferings. His integrity in the working spot is not recognized. Being the senior most military officer he deserves to become the commissioner. But this position is offered to a man named Baker who is much younger to him. This is really a suffering in the form of disappointment. Scobie does not lose heart when he looks at the injustice done to him. Another heart-breaking situation in the life of Scobie is that his daughter dies early in her life. It is a great blow to the family. The greatness of his character lies in the fact that he does not give up his faith even when the tragic death of his daughter plunges him into deep depression. This is where Greene underlines the steadfastness of faith in God. No suffering can assail a believer and make him deny the existence of God.
Besides enduring a series of sufferings, Scobie makes a supreme sacrifice for the welfare of others. Selfish motives are in none of his thoughts. Throughout his life he gives more time and importance to other people’s needs and wishes. Greene teaches the significance of making sacrifice by the betterment of others in this episode. He hints that unless a man dies to his self he can never be a useful vessel for others. The more you sacrifice, the more you can offer to others. Ever since grief plunges Louis into deep depression, owing to her daughter’s death, she has been under constant stress. As a result of mental agony, she suffers from sleeplessness. At this point of time, Scobie stands by her. There are times when he stays awake with her for hours together in the night. He does not murmur when a situation warrants him to sacrifice his comforts for the sake of his wife. When Louis continues to feel stressed he makes arrangement for her to go to South Africa, believing that she will bounce back to normal life by means of staying in a different place for a while. To make arrangement for her trip, he borrows money from a Syrian trader named Yosef. All his sufferings and sacrifice imply the fact that there is no greater joy for a man than to live and make others happy. According to Greene, only those who believe in God can lead such a sacrificial life. Their life can be compared to a candle that melts itself so as to give life to others.

In *A Burnt-out Case* also, Greene deals with the theme of suffering and sacrifice. Querry the protagonist of the novel is the famous architect. If he stays in a developed country and carries out his work as an architect, he can earn enormous amount of money. But he does not go after fame and fortune. He chooses to walk on the path of suffering. Having renounced all his desires, he volunteers to stay in a leper colony in the Congo. The dispensary run by the missionaries here provides care to the lepers. Having been isolated by their loved ones, the lepers from different parts of the country stay here. Querry chooses not only to reside here but also to associate
himself with the lepers. The mission campus is not a convenient place to dwell in. The dispensary
does not even have fans. Yet, Doctor Collin volunteers himself to carry out his medical service in
this particular place. He is magnanimous enough to touch the lepers with warmth of love. Greene
shows that there can be no greater sacrifice than to touch the untouchable lepers with an
expression of love. The compassion for the lepers shown by Doctor Collin is the reminiscence of
Christ’s love towards the lepers of His time. When a leper is isolated by the society, he lives in
constant despair. When he is denied of love, he becomes brokenhearted. All he longs for is a
loving touch that can strengthen his dampened spirit. This is what Doctor Collin gives to the
lepers in the Congo. In this episode Greene depicts his sacrifice as the highest form of spiritual
understanding and maturity.

When a young servant by name Deo Gratias is appointed to assist Querry, the latter treats
the former with immense love. His virtues stand for God’s love and compassion towards man. In
terms of morality, Querry is pure and holy. But Rycker falsely accuses him of committing
adultery with his wife. The suspicious nature of Rycker drives him to shoot Querry. Thus,
Querry is shot dead with false accusation. His death has made him a martyr. Greene is of the
opinion that in order to attain martyrdom one has to go through the path of suffering. In spiritual
life, no one can by-pass suffering and sacrifice which are vital components in the path that leads
to heaven.

In The Bomb Party, Anna is the daughter of Doctor Fischer who is one of the wealthiest
men. Anna stoops down to marry a poor man named Jones. Besides being poor, he is very old.
Moreover he has lost his left hand in the blitz in London. When they meet each other in a café,
she proposes to him. Even after he tells her of his old age, deformity and poverty she is
magnanimous enough to accept him as her lover. Their wedding takes place in all simplicity.
Although they lead their life with little comfort, there is love, joy and peace in their married life. During Christmas they have an eventful celebration. Here, Greene shows that where there is sacrifice, there is great joy. Anna makes sacrifice to accept Jones, even though he belongs to a down trodden family background. Her supreme sacrifice paves the way for her to be blessed with a blissful married life.

If the number of people, who makes sacrifice for the betterment of others, increases, this world will become a conducive place to live in. The root cause of so many problems is self-centeredness. Since people tend to think only about themselves and not about the need of others, there is a lot of chaos in this world. There is a streak of sadism in the life of people as their sacrifice-making intention has decreased. The exemplary life of Scobie, Querry, Doctor Collin and the whisky priest beckon the readers to commit themselves to lead a sacrificial life which can be beneficial to others. In the spiritual journey that leads to the ultimate destination of heaven, one should definitely go through the path of suffering and sacrifice. Self denial is the first step that prompts every man to realize the importance of spiritual values.

After having painted a vivid picture of the dynamics of sin, the gift of salvation and the glory of suffering and sacrifice, Greene deals with the attributes of God in his novels. One of the main objectives of Greene is to substantiate that God is not merely a supernatural power. He is a person with whom everyone can maintain intimacy. He does not portray God as one who is far away from man. According to him, God is only a prayer away. In order to simplify the concept of God, Greene depicts the divine characteristics in an engrossing manner. He uses amazing stories as a tool to draw the attention of the readers towards the attributes of God. The central theme in his novels is that God alone can enable man to understand the purpose of life in this world. One of the crucial questions in life is where man would go after his death. If there is no
God, there can be no hope about life after death. Man can do whatever he feels like doing in this world. He need not necessarily care about the morality. Only those who believe in God can attach importance to a righteous life.

With the primary objective of giving a clear picture of God, Greene depicts His attributes from different angles. He does not use any complex imagery to describe who God is. The method he uses in describing God is distinct and different. He uses various components such as love, sex, marriage, murder, persecution and betrayal with a view to showing who God is. Therefore readers find his novels lively as well as informative. First he shows God as one who is hungry for human love. Even though God is the creator of the whole universe, he longs to have a fellowship with mortal being. In *The End of the Affair*, God enables Sarah to understand His love. In *Brighton Rock*, wherever Pinkie goes the presence of God follows him. It gives the implication that God longs for human love. His novels are crowded with sinners and none of them is condemned.

In *The End of the Affair*, Greene depicts God as the one who transforms the life of sinners whose conditions are beyond hope. Sarah betrays her husband’s trust and develops an affair with Bendrix. Richard Symthe preaches against Christianity. God transforms the lives of these two people. Sarah gets rid of her affair whereas, Symthe becomes a believer. Besides depicting God as one who transforms the life of sinners, Greene shows Him as the performer of miracles. Richard Symthe has an ugly mark on his face. God’s wonder-working power heals it and his face becomes quite normal. This episode provides proof to the readers that no disease is too big for God to heal. God’s miraculous touch can heal any disease, no matter how severe it is. Another attribute of God that Greene shows is that God is the giver of freewill. God has not created man as a robot that is operated by somebody. This concept is quite evident in *The End of the Affair*,.
Brighton Rock and The Power and the Glory. The protagonists are given the free will to choose between the good and evil. In addition to portraying God, as the giver of freewill to man, Greene also portrays God as the giver of life, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. These attributes of God beckon the readers to experience them in every aspect of their lives. All the Christian virtues discussed by Greene give the implication that man can live a purposeful life only if he trusts in God and make him an integral part of his life.

After having an in-depth study on the novels of Greene, it is perceived that Greene’s writing in disguise of a prophetic voice, exhorts the readers to turn away from evil deeds which destroy the serenity of life. What makes him a unique writer is that he keeps focused on drawing the attention of the readers to one particular truth that life in this world is absolutely meaningless, unless one finds its purpose. One can find that purpose only by way of trusting in God. All his religious novels provide the readers with a revelation that man can lead a peaceful life if he depends on God in all walks of life. To put in a nut-shell, the oft-repeated theme in Greene writing is ‘Know God! Know peace! No God! No peace!’.

Despite the fact that Graham Greene is not a theologian, he is concerned about man’s salvation. As De Vitis comments in his journal titled The modern English review, “Greene’s preoccupation is chiefly with the fall of man and with the possibility of redemption”(607). Greene has a strong conviction that spiritual truth alone can set man free from the bondage of sin. In this regard, he seems to advocate Christian faith to the readers. Since Greene has lavishly used the biblical truths in his novels, one should not jump to a wrong conclusion that he is a religious fanatic. As readers refer to an article titled Graham Greene: A pioneer novelist published in the English journal in the 39th volume, what they can understand is that “Christianity is not a creed but a way of life; and it is in such terms that Greene has attempted to interpret all the spiritual truths in his novels”(416).
Dealing with the theme of suffering in his novels, Greene persuades the readers to understand that not all the time one can perceive the reason for one’s suffering. Suffering may come to both the godly as well as the ungodly. Man can have the assurance that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. Robert Browning in his *Rabbi Ben Ezra* uses the potter image in connection with God. If man understands that God is the potter and man is the clay, there will be no need to worry about anything. The potter puts the clay into the wheel. When the wheel spins it is nearly painful. But soon after the process is over, there comes a beautiful vessel. This concept is beautifully depicted in his poem.

“Ay, note that potters wheel,
That metaphor and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay” (*RBE* 1)

Greene persuades the readers to take life as it is because God is in control. The Whisky priest, Sarah Miles and Scobie trust in God who has complete control over every form of suffering that they undergo and remain calm while going through tough times.

Throughout the history of English literature many writers have dealt with theological matters in their works. Hawthorne, Melville, William Barrett, Nikos Kazantzakis, Georges Bernanos, Ernest Hemingway, C.S. Lewis, Thomas Mann, Flannery O’Connor, Charles Williams, Henry James and Graham Greene are but a few names in the list of distinguished writers who have worked explicitly and creatively with religious beliefs and symbols. But what makes Greene unique among these writers is that he touches upon the much needed spiritual values by means of using illustrations pertaining to secular themes. As a result, even those who lack interest in religious matters tend to be convinced that spiritual experience is the most
significant component of man’s life. After having read Greene’s novels, no reader can brush aside God.

Apart from the issues related to sin, salvation, sacrifice and God, there is wide scope for further research to be carried out. A researcher may make an attempt to have a profound study on the humanitarian concern of Greene in his novels and his views on social and political issues. By means of carrying out a research on these topics one can gain new insights into his novels. Besides carrying out a research on the thematic structures of his novels, a researcher may also set his focus on a comparative study of Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene as both of them are Catholic writers. This will be an interesting area to work on. Moreover, there is another area which provides a wide scope for a researcher. So far no one has translated the novels of Greene into Tamil. Translating his works into Tamil will surely pave the way for the Tamilians to read Greene in vernacular and appreciate his artistic skills.