Chapter 3

3. Polemics of Forgiveness and Salvation

One of the comforting lessons the reader can learn from the novels of Greene is He forgives the sins of men no matter how big they are. According to Greene, God’s love is so wonderful that human beings cannot easily define it with their limited knowledge. It is so high that no one can get over it. It is so deep that no one can get under it. It is so wide that no one can get around it. His boundless love can best be explained by His characteristic feature to forgive the trespasses of mankind. Greene reinforces the biblical concept of God’s forgiveness which has no boundary at all. An in-depth reading of his novels will certainly prompt the readers to discern that even the most unpardonable sinners can turn to be the recipient of God’s forgiveness and salvation.

Nowhere in the scripture there is a text that states directly that man is consigned to the torments of hell. The thief who was crucified with Jesus is no better than the characters of Graham Greene. But he was the first to whom the joy of heaven was promised while hanging on the cross. Jesus says to the thief in the Gospel according to St. Luke, “I tell you the truth today you will be with me in paradise”(Luke 23:43). This episode is the epitome of God’s forgiveness
to show that His mercy knows no bounds. Greene is of the opinion that despite one’s shortcomings and weaknesses, one can find comfort through God’s forgiveness that springs from His unfailing love. When one meditates upon the Bible, one can comprehend God’s forgiving love hidden in its pages. Forgiveness of sins is offered to everyone who believes in God and turns to Him. For instance, the undeserving prodigal son is forgiven by his father who symbolically represents God. Despite the fact that the prodigal son has squandered his father’s wealth, when he returns, his father receives him with open-arms. There can be no better example which highlights the forgiveness of God than that of the episode of the prodigal son. Being a catholic, Greene would have certainly read the Bible and contemplated this passage over and over again that depicts the supreme form of God’s forgiveness. Probably this would have been a source of inspiration for him to project God as one who lavishly bestows His forgiveness on the sinners.

In order to understand the value of God’s forgiveness in the novels of Greene, it is appropriate to have a glimpse on Greene’s life prior to having a proper understanding of God under the guidance of Father Trollope. Greene was under the bondage of mental agony. He was spiritually blind to comprehend the truth that God forgives any sinner and accepts him or her as His own child. Since he was in a state of extreme frustration, he intended to commit suicide. It was at this moment that he found God’s forgiving love through Father Trollope. Probably it was his own spiritual experience that prompted him to show God as one who is abundant in offering His forgiveness without measure and without any prejudice to everybody. Having experienced the joy of forgiveness of sins offered by God, Greene cannot refrain from sharing it with others. That is the reason why he depicts God as a provider of forgiveness in his novels.
The philosophy of Greene is that no sin is too big for God to forgive. A sinner need not carry the load of sin all through his life and live in a state of guilt. There is a hope for him provided he confesses his sins and turns to God. All that God expects from man is a sense of repentance about his sinful deeds. In other words a sinner must have a broken and contrite heart so as to receive God’s forgiveness. Greene probably reiterates the words of the psalmist found in The Book of Psalms. “The sacrifice of God are a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise”(Ps. 51:17). God’s forgiveness can best be explained only by those who have experienced it in their life. Greene experienced it so did David. There is a similarity between these two persons. David forcibly took for himself the wife of one of his most trusted military officers. He got her pregnant and then had her husband killed. Afterwards he confessed his sin and received the joy of forgiveness from God. His desire to obtain God’s forgiveness is expressed in the 51st Chapter of the book of Psalm. Having been forgiven by God, David became a godly man and got the privilege of being called one of the heroes of faith in the Bible.

The primary purpose of Greene dealing with the theme of God’s forgiveness is to make his readers understand that when God interferes in the life of a sinner, the latter will undergo a metamorphosis from sinful life to God’s own child. God can accomplish a life-changing transformation to all who put their trust in Him and confess their sins. The main requirement to obtain God’s forgiveness is faith which is the anchor of any Christian. The protagonists of Greene are morally weak. They are highly susceptible to the sinful pleasures. In spite of their spiritual vulnerability, they stand fast in their faith. That is what makes them admirable characters. In Hebrews, it is said, “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because any one who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him”(Heb. 11: 6). It is not that the protagonists in the novels of Greene have a tremendous faith
in God. What Greene wants to say to the readers is that a sinner with a little bit of faith in God is far better than an atheist. Faith in God makes the sinner worthy of His forgiveness.

*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines the word ‘forgive’ as “to stop feeling angry with somebody who has done something to harm”. However, the divine definition is much more enlightening. True forgiveness is erasing every resenting thought, attitude, healing every hurt feeling and restoring a better and purer love relationship with the offender. That is what God offers to every sinner. Strictly speaking, a sinner ought to be punished and undergo eternal condemnation. Yet, God has a penchant to bestow forgiveness on a sinner who comes to Him because He is rich in His mercy. From the beginning to the end, every page of *The Bible* tells God’s love and His forgiveness. Adam and Eve sinned by tasting the forbidden fruit. When they heard the sound of the Lord God, they hid from Him among the trees of the garden. The first thing He asked Adam was, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9). It does not mean He asked that question primarily because He had not known his whereabouts. Rather He did so hoping that they would hear his loving voice and come to Him. When they told Him that they were naked, God showed mercy on them. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. The garment symbolically represents His forgiveness. Thus, every book in the Bible implies the fact that God is willing to forgive the sinful man and accept him just as he is. The central theme of the Bible is that God loves the sinners and forgives them. He does not give them what they deserve. Greene presents the same concept of God’s forgiveness through many illustrations in his novels. *The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair* and *Brighton Rock* underline one common truth. What he really anticipates of the readers to know is that every sinner has a forgiving Saviour whose love and patience are beyond limit. No sinner under the sun can push God too far. He is eager to have fellowship with the sinner. He is a heavenly Father
who is free to identify with the sinner’s situation and experiences great joy in seeing him restored to his rightful place as His child. His greatest concern is man, the crown of His creation, created in His own image, not his sin. His focus is on the sinful man and his willingness to comply with His will for his life. The Psalmist says, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever”(Ps. 103: 7-8).

The core theme of these verses is that God is gracious enough to forgive any sinner who turns to Him. Greene extracts the concept of God’s forgiveness from the psalm and presents it in his novels. Maria Couto in her book *Graham Greene: On the Frontier* says, “The God of Greene’s religion is a merciful God, the source of all love”[65].

While depicting God as one who is rich in His mercy, willing to forgive the trespasses of man, he lays an emphasis on conditions of forgiveness too. He says emphatically that God requires two things of everyman as conditions of forgiveness, repentance and confession. Repentance highlights a sincere resolve to turn away from sin and towards God. The repentance involves attitudinal change on the part of the sinner. No man is absolutely perfect. One may fail in one’s attempt to avoid sin. In that case God enables man to make a fresh start. The second requirement is that one must be willing to confess one’s sins to God to obtain His forgiveness of sins. John in his first epistle says: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”(I John 1: 8 – 9). In order to portray the magnitude of the biblical concept of confession, Greene purposely presents his protagonists in such a way that they confess their sinful deeds to God.
When a sinner confesses his sins to God, what he really does is that he admits his inability to deal with his sin. He accepts the fact that he needs God’s grace to remove the guilty feeling from his heart. When the readers study the novels of Greene, the first person to catch our attention who longs for God’s grace is the “Whisky Priest” in *The Power and the Glory*. He has zeal to live for God. That is the reason why he has come forward to serve God as a priest. Despite constant opposition in the Mexican city he remains firm in his commitment in being a priest. Being engulfed by fear, many priests renounce their calling and flee away. They are not able to hold on to their commitment because religious persecution was rampant in the Mexican city. But as for the whisky priest, he is steadfast in being loyal to the divine call to be a priest. Therefore he makes it a point to endure suffering for the sake of the kingdom of God. But he is a man with seeming short-comings. He is haunted by his guilt because he has got entangled in the web of adultery. Besides, he cannot help but drink alcohol at regular intervals. But deep within himself one can hear him lament over his helplessness. The apostle Paul too has undergone such a path in his life. He says: “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (Romans 7:24).

It implies that he was constantly wrestling with his sinful instinct. He frankly admitted the fact that it was too difficult for him to overcome the temptation of being carried away by the sinful pleasures. Similarly, the whisky Priest is absolutely aware of his being under the influence of sin. That is the reason why his lips are constantly pleading with God. “Sorry and beg pardon for all my sins’’(PG 71). By saying this prayer repeatedly, he could express his spiritual vulnerability to God. Obviously it is the godly sorrow that Paul talks about in his epistle. “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation”(II Cor. 7:10). It is quite imperative for a sinner
to have sorrow about his own sins. That is why Greene projects the whisky Priest in such a way that he keeps lamenting and expressing his struggle with sin.

The first thing a sinner ought to do so as to obtain God’s forgiveness is to feel sorry about his sins. Moreover, he has to acknowledge that the sins he has committed are worthy of condemnation in the sight of God. A person who justifies his sins can no way become a recipient of God’s forgiveness. Rather, a person who cries to God with a broken heart and confesses his sins can turn to be a recipient of God’s forgiveness. In order to understand it better, it is appropriate to refer to the episode of the Pharisee and the tax collector in The Bible “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get’. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’(Luke 18:10 -13).

Both of them prayed to God. But God did not hear the prayer of the Pharisee as he was boastful of his keeping religious laws. It was the tax collector whose prayer was acceptable in the sight of God. The reason is that he humbled himself and admitted that he was a sinner.

In The Power and the Glory, one can find the whisky priest being broken-hearted, acknowledging his sin. He is constantly telling God that he is not worthy to carry out the divine work which has been entrusted into his hands. Instead of pretending to be a righteous man, the priest realizes his sins and prays to God with remorse and penitence. What Greene intends to say to the readers is that God’s love has no boundary at all. When a sinner comes to Him just as He is, God is gracious and full of compassion to accept him. What makes the whisky priest
acceptable in the sight of God is his broken and contrite heart. Francis L. Kunkael compares the whisky priest with the apostle Peter in his book *The Theme of Sin and Grace in Greene.* He says, “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 form the betrayal (57 -58).

The apostle Peter loved Jesus so much that he was willing to follow Him at any cost. When Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times, the latter could not accept it. The prediction of Jesus came true when Peter denied Him three times. Peter remembered the words of Jesus spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today you will disown me three times” (Luke 22:61). On recalling His words, he wept bitterly. The same Peter who denied Christ three times went on to become a martyr. He died for the cause of God’s kingdom. Despite the fact that the whisky priest does not literally deny Christ, the sins committed by him are equal to denying God. Even after having tasted the love of God he commits adultery which is indeed a repulsive sin in the sight of God. Figuratively speaking, the sin of adultery is a sin of denial. Having realized his sins, the whisky priest cries on so many occasions just as Peter did. Greene testifies to the fact that the whisky priest cries bitterly about his sinful deeds. “Tears poured down his face” (PG 199).

Realizing one’s sins and shedding tears cause the Almighty God to offer His forgiveness. When a sinner cries, being overwhelmed with genuine sorrow, he expresses his real intention to shun evil and love God. The probable feeling within himself is ‘Lord I wish to love you and lead the kind of life which is pleasing to you. Yet, I am not able to do so because of my sinful instinct that has enslaved me. Pardon me and accept me as your child’. Paul also had a similar experience. He says, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do” (Romans 7:15). At this point of time, Greene finds that the key to forgiveness is the
realization of one’s helplessness. A sinner need not be in a state of despair forever. He can have a comeback if he turns to God, feeling sorry about his sins. God is able to restore a sinner to the extent of being called His own child.

Another important thing the readers can learn from the life of whisky priest is that a sinner should believe that if he goes to God by way of confession, he will be accepted by God. The priest says, “I shall go to confession: I shall feel contrition and be forgiven: eternal life will begin for me all over again” (PG 60). At this juncture Greene indirectly states that there is an eternal life after death. In order to inherit the eternal life one must have the assurance of having been forgiven by God. Without this assurance no one can attain salvation. The whisky priest is very much aware of this. Therefore, he makes it a point to obtain God’s forgiveness by means of confessing his sins. St. John says in his epistle: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1: 8 – 9). As a mark of obedience to God’s word, the whisky priest confesses all his sins. He says, “O God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins …. Crucified… worthy of thy dreadful punishment” (PG 199).

He frankly admits that every sin that he has committed is equal to having crucified Christ once again on the cross. Here Greene depicts the enormity of the whisky priest’s repentance. He knows for certain that his sins are worthy of punishment. Strictly speaking, the wrath of God should befall him. But God in his mercy forgives him. Prior to being executed, the priest repents of his sinful deeds. After his execution, he becomes a martyr. He is known for his sacrificial death for the expansion of God’s kingdom on this earth. Needless to say, the readers are wonder-struck, thinking how it is possible for such a sinful priest to raise to the level of a saint. The possible answer that Greene renders to the readers is that God is rich in offering His forgiveness.
Any sinner can come to Him and be forgiven. The power and the glory of God can be passed on to the people through a sinful man like the whisky priest. That is the core theme of this novel.

In order to understand the depth of God’s forgiving love, one must refer to the verse which struck the whisky priest’s mind. “God so loved the world that He gave His begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (PG 119). This verse found in John 3:16 is an integral part of The Bible that speaks volumes on God’s love. Jesus told this while indulging in a conversation with Nicodemus. Max Lucado in his book 3:16 The Number of Hope says: “It is the most famous conversation in The Bible”(1).

With the primary objective of explaining the importance of repentance to Nicodemus, Christ said, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3 :3) The words uttered by Christ sounded odd to Nicodemus. He wondered how it was possible for a man to enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born again. At this moment Christ replied: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life”(John 3: 16). The essence of this verse is that anyone who believes in Christ will obtain forgiveness and eternal life.

‘Whoever’ unfurls 3:16 as a banner for the ages. ‘Whoever’ unrolls the welcome mat of heaven to humanity. ‘Whoever’ invites the world to God. Christ could have easily narrowed the scope, changing ‘whoever’ into ‘whatever’. ‘Whatever Jew believes’ are ‘whatever woman follows me’. But He used no qualifier. The pronoun is wonderfully infinite. ‘Whoever’ includes every man born under the sun. The word breaks down racial fences and dynamites social classes. It bypasses gender borders. ‘Whoever’ makes it pretty clear that God exports His grace worldwide. No one can make an attempt to restrict it. There are many other similar verses in the

The primary objective of Greene to let the whisky priest recall John 3:16 is that he wants to assure the readers that no sinner is too far away to find God’s forgiveness. Finding salvation is within everyone’s reach by virtue of faith and prayer. A father never disowns his children when they stumble. He does not dismiss them when they fall, and he will not punish or reprimand them for their shortcomings. He will never cast them out of the family. The reason is they are biologically connected to the father. In the same way God does not reject a sinner once for all just because he commits a sin. Believing in Christ is the gateway to forgiveness and eternal life. Instead of believing in God, people believe in themselves because they have trust in themselves. ‘Believe in yourself’ is the common name selection of the modern world. People try harder, work longer and dig deeper. But they never make it a point to believe in God. The phrase ‘Believe in God’ does not digest well in today’s self-sufficient life of man.

The whisky priest never puts his trust in his being pious. Instead he has placed his whole-hearted trust in God’s grace which is instrumental in enabling a person to find forgiveness of sins. When people hold him in high esteem thinking that he is a holy man deserving reverence, he responds oddly. The manner in which he reacts is vividly depicted by Greene. “The priest giggled: he couldn’t stop himself. He said: “I don’t think martyrs are like this….. Martyrs are holy men… I tell you I am in a state of mortal sin. I have done things I couldn’t talk to you about”(PG 119). The whisky priest never projects himself to be spiritually superior to others.
This is what makes him a sublime character that is worthy to be forgiven by God despite his unpardonable sins. He never misuses his positions and cheats the congregation unlike other Catholic priests.

During the early sixteenth century many Catholic priests were cheating the people in the name of religion. They abused their power and never guided people to find the love of God. As far as the whisky priest is concerned he is very humble, admitting that he himself is such a sinful man who is worthy of condemnation. His eyes are constantly fixed on Christ who is capable of forgiving him and accepting him just as he is. Although he is not able to lead a victorious life as a loyal priest he is able to keep his faith alive. His only belief is that whoever believes in Christ shall never perish but have an everlasting life. He has an unshakable faith that Christ has the ability to blot out his trespasses and provide him eternal life. That is why he never refrains from doing the pastoral work.

The thing that prompts the priest to be steadfast in his commitment in serving God is his belief in the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. On one hand the whisky priest keeps confessing that he is a wretched sinner. He further says that this world is a world of treachery, violence and lust. Having made an assessment of the spiritual status of the world, he says “it was for this world that Christ had died” (PG 91).

The manner in which the priest acknowledges the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross is one of the most important aspects of The Power and the Glory. Here, he says emphatically that in order to find salvation man need not necessarily observe any tradition and religious ceremonies. Keeping the rituals can no way enable a man to obtain salvation. But what is really required of man is realizing his sinful deeds and confessing them to Christ who has already paid
the penalty for the whole human race on the cross. The priest openly confesses his sins: “I’ve eaten meat on Fridays…. I haven’t fasted in lent I do not know how many years” (PG 90-91). The priest knows for certain that he has not kept the religious ordinances set by the religious men of the past. Yet, he believes that God will forgive him and grant him salvation because he believes that his sins have already been washed by the blood of Christ. This is where Greene highlights the core theme of The Bible. Since Christ has died on the cross for the sins of the world there is no need for a sinner to carry the burden of sin upon His shoulders. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, God wanted to show that He would make a way for the forgiveness of the sin of mankind. As a mark of demonstrating it symbolically He killed a lamb and shed its blood so as to provide a covering for sinful Adam and Eve. “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21).

The sins committed by Adam and Eve created a barrier between God and man. Man was not able to have a fellowship with God on account of his transgression. Therefore God sent His son Christ to die on the cross and thereby He intended to remove the wall of division. William Piper in his book Great Doctrines of The Bible says, “The word ‘redemption’ is derived from the Greek word ‘lutroo’. ‘Lutroo’ means to set free by the paying of a price” (4). Greene presents the character of the whisky priest in such a way that he places his trust in Christ who died not only for the sins of the world but also for his own sins. According to the spiritual law he must be vehemently punished for his sins. But as he looks at Christ who shed His blood for the remissions of the sins, he gets freedom from the bondage of sins and dies as a martyr. It is amazing to note that a wicked Priest, who has committed unpardonable sins, has had the privilege of being called a holy man by the next generation. Can a sinner become a saint? The Bible says it is possible. According to Greene’s conviction it is possible too. Paul has stated: “In
Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Eph. 1:7).

John Bunyan also presents the truth of God’s forgiveness being given to a sinner through the character of Christian in The Pilgrim’s Progress,

“He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending,
and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below,
in the bottom a sepulcher.
So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross,
his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back,
and began to tumble,
and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of sepulcher,
where it fell in, and I saw it no more” (46).

This passage gives a vivid picture about how a sinner gets deliverance from the bondage of sin as soon as he comes to Christ who has shed His blood for the sins of the world. The episode of the whisky priest being forgiven by God’s redeeming love beckons the readers to look at the cross of Calvary where Christ accomplished the work of salvation. The biblical passage of forgiveness gets reflected in The Power and the Glory. What Greene wants to make the readers understand is that Christ came, not for the strong, but for the weak; not for the righteous, but for the sinners.

Another important thing this novel highlights is that every man born in this world should have a personal experience of salvation to attain eternal life. Whether he is a layman or a
religious man, salvation is invariably mandatory for all to attain eternal life promised by Christ. Salvation cannot be earned by good works. One must be worthy of receiving God’s grace by confessing one’s sins. Paul has stated: “It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast”(Eph. 2:8 – 9). If God provides salvation only to those who are morally good, there will be no effect for God’s grace. As a result the blood that Christ shed on the cross will become less significant. In order to demonstrate how God provides salvation to the sinners by His sheer grace, Greene purposely presents the priest as a wicked man who is not worthy of being accepted by God. The priest knows pretty well that salvation is a free gift given by God’s grace. Therefore, he pleads with God to forgive his sins.

“Have mercy on me O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin”(Ps. 51:1-2). Greene’s primary objective in this novel is to show no matter how far you have run away from God; He is only a prayer away. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”(Romans 10:13). Unless a man admits that he is a sinner and prays to God he cannot be a recipient of God’s forgiveness. One must stoop down by confessing one's sins so that God will show his mercy upon him.

The way the whisky priest prepares himself to die by being shot dead, draws the attention of the readers. There is not an iota of fear in him to face death. The reason is that he has the assurance that his sins have been forgiven. Since he looks forward to the eternal life, he is least afraid of encountering his death. It is quite natural for any man to be in a state of panic, when he is in on the verge of being executed. But the whisky priest embraces death as peacefully as Stephen did in The New Testament. Stephen was stoned to death since he preached the good
news of the gospel of Christ. Prior to being stoned to death Stephen was defending his stand. At that moment “all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15).

For a believer who has the assurance that his sins have been forgiven, death is not a miserable end. Rather it is the gateway to heaven. The primary reason why the whisky priest remains absolutely quiet at the time of being shot dead is that he is eagerly looking forward to inheriting the eternal life that Christ has promised to all the believers. The priest is steadfast in his conviction that he has fought the good fight and has finished the race successfully. At this moment Greene portrays how a believer’s life ends on a note of hope, owing to his assurance of salvation. He projects forgiveness as a foretaste of heaven. As soon as a sinner humbly confesses his sins to God, the very first miracle that takes place in his life is the removal of the burden of sin. Peace flows like a stream of water through his soul. It surpasses the human understanding. It is beyond one’s intellectual power. The next significant thing that occurs in the life of a forgiven sinner is that he has the assurance that he will reign with Christ in eternity.

In *The End of the Affair*, Greene provides a touching illustration to substantiate that God can forgive and transform the life of even the most wretched sinner in the world. Here Greene enables the readers to get an insight into God’s redeeming love that operates in the life of a miserable sinner named Sarah. Adultery is the most repulsive sin in the sight of God. It is God’s plan that the husband and wife should remain loyal to each other and thereby they should preserve the holy sacrament of marriage. But as for Sarah, despite the fact that she is married to a civil servant called Henry, she does not remain faithful to him. She has an adulterous relationship with the novelist named Maurice Bendrix. During the period of *The Old Testament*, there was an ordinance that if a man or a woman was caught red-handed in adultery, they should be stoned to
death. Such a law was imposed on man with the primary intention of teaching him that God abhors adultery. But this novel shows God as one who forgives even the immoral people and accepts them.

John depicts how Jesus deals with a woman caught in adultery in his gospel. One day, the Jewish leaders and Pharisees got a woman caught in adultery and placed her out in front of the staring crowd. They told Jesus that she was caught in the very act of adultery. They further insisted that she should be stoned to death, according to the law. Christ said, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7). In this gospel, John proclaims the mind-boggling news that Christ has come not to condemn the world but to save mankind through his love. The End of the Affair is also a manifestation of the same concept of God’s forgiving love. It beckons even the immoral people like Sarah to taste the joy of salvation. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains a list of heroes of faith. The author has thrown light upon the life of men and women who did marvelous things for the glory of God. He has included the name of a prostitute called Rahab. It is beyond our intellectual power to imagine an immoral woman being called a woman of faith. But in the sight of God she stands as a forgiven sinner worthy of inheriting the eternal life. “By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient” (Heb. 11:3). Her act of welcoming the spies symbolically stands for her faith in God. The spiritual truth that is hidden in The End of the Affair is that if God can forgive and justify an immoral woman like Rahab then how certain it is that there is not a sinner whom God cannot save.

Sarah, after being romantically inclined towards Maurice Bendrix, intends to do away with her relationship with her husband Henry. As far as Henry is concerned he is morally upright he does not love any other woman except his wife. He is such a man of righteousness. Having
spent many days in her sinful living Sarah comes forward to pray to God for the first time in her life. Even though she is a Christian by birth, she has never had a personal experience of salvation. Probably her parents did not bring her up in proper Christian faith. Therefore she is merely a nominal Christian. She says, “My parents never believed in prayer” (EA 95).

The reason why she prays to God is that she wants Bendrix to be protected from a bomb raid. She prays: “Dear God, make me believe. I cannot believe. Make believe” (EA 95). Here she openly confesses to God that she is not a woman having faith in Him. She pleads to God that He should provide her with faith which is the anchor of the Christian life. The manner of her prayer bears a striking similarity to the father of a boy who had been possessed by an evil spirit in the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark. When the boy was brought to Jesus, the father pleaded with Him saying “If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us” (Mark 9:22). Jesus replies: “Everything is possible for him who believes” (Mark 9:23). On hearing the words spoken by Christ, the immediate response of the father was, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). Here Jesus honours the father who openly confesses that he is weak in his faith. Similarly, Christ answers the prayer of Sarah who has frankly admitted her being weak in her faith.

By God’s grace Bendrix survives. Sarah gives up her adulterous relationship with Bendrix as a mark of surrendering her entire life to God. Patent Pending, a hymn writer says, “Prayer is the key to heaven but faith unlocks the door”. Greene seems to approve of this. The hope that God always listens to the prayer offered by mankind enables a sinner to have an access to God. When a sinner constantly prays to God like Sarah does, what really happens is that sinner is brought close to God. Eventually a transformation takes place in his life. Another important thing that Greene talks about is that when a sinner expects to receive forgiveness from
God he has to believe that Christ alone can save him. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (I Tim. 1:15). This idea echoes in the words of Sarah’s prayer. She says to God, “I believe you were born. I believe you died for us. I believe you are God” (EA 120). The prayer of Sarah is the most important aspect of the novel wherein Greene highlights the requirements of forgiveness. If a sinner wants to obtain salvation, he has to believe in the Immaculate Conception of Christ. Then he has to believe that Christ died on the cross for the remission of the sins of mankind. Sarah’s prayer offered in faith has brought about a tremendous transformation in her character because she acknowledges her faith in the Conception of Christ and his sacrificial death on the cross.

God grants the petition of Sarah by protecting Bendrix. Subsequently Sarah makes a decision to lead a kind of life that will be pleasing in the sight of God. She puts an end to her adulterous relationship with Bendrix when God comes into the life of a sinner; he will never be the same. He will not continue to do the things that he used to do. “If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (I Cor. 5:17). Having tasted the love of God, Sarah is very careful not to have any kind of illegal relationship with Bendrix. When she keeps on avoiding his company, the latter is completely bewildered. He does not know anything about the spiritual transformation that God has bestowed on Sarah. He suspects that Sarah has another lover. He wants to find out the person with whom she is maintaining an intimate relationship. For this purpose he seeks the help of Parkis who agrees to be a detective with whose help he takes off the diary used by Sarah.

The diary consists of many significant entries made by Sarah. It reveals the fact that she has entered into an agreement with God that she would completely do away with her relationship with Bendrix, if God protects her. Bendrix is exceedingly angry with God for having changed the
life of Sarah. On one occasion Sarah was praying in the church. Bendrix was watching this scene. “She was just sitting there with her eyes closed. I only saw her by the light of the candle before the statue, for the whole place was very dark. I sat down behind her like Mr. Parkis and waited…. I knew she was in pain and I could not leave her alone in pain. I came and sat beside her and put my hand on her knee…. She said, ‘please won’t you let me be” (EA 128).

In this episode the last line uttered by Sarah is very important where Greene shows how a sinner who has been saved reacts after having tasted the love of God. There were times when Sarah used to spend hours together in bed with Bendrix. It is all the more horrible to note that their filthy life was taking shape in the house of Sarah itself. Whenever Henry was away it was convenient for both Bendrix and Sarah to gratify their carnal desires. Having sold her soul to the passing pleasures of sins, she was completely under the grip of Satan. Now she is a changed person touched by the love of God. She has put an end to her affair with Bendrix. When he once again comes close to her, she is very cautious not to have any intimacy with him as before. She does not give him room to be with her. That is why she asks him to leave her alone. Prior to her spiritual rebirth she is living in darkness. Now Christ, the light of the world has come into her heart. Therefore, she cannot afford to commit the same sins she used to do. Christ said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Kulshrestha in her book Graham Greene: The Novelist says, “The mode of progress in The End of the Affair is from nature to super nature, from eras to agape” (129). ‘Eras’ means sensual love and ‘agape’ means divine love. Greene distinguishes between these two kinds of love by painting the character of Sarah. After having experienced agape, Sarah offers herself as a living sacrifice which is pleasing to God. Paul says, “You have been set free from sin and have
become slaves to righteousness” (Romans 6:18). Sarah was under the bondage of sin prior to experiencing the love of God. In other words she was a slave to Bendrix who is an embodiment of evil. But after having surrendered herself to Christ, she cannot go back to her former way of life where she was indulging in sinful pleasures. “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24). Sarah has nailed all her evil desires to the cross and crucified them there. So she stands firm in her commitment to lead a kind of life pleasing to God.

Bendrix uses all the possible means to persuade her from being remaining firm in her commitment. But his attempt to pull her back to the sinful life goes in vain. Sarah’s life is a living example to show how a believer in Christ starts leading a new life, putting aside the sinful desires. Her life is a journey from darkness to light. Maria Couto in her book Graham Greene: On the Frontier says, “The End of the Affair is a powerful representation of a journey into a new awareness, a spiritual journey, which connects love of man with love of God” (81). The truth that Greene depicts in this novel is that when a person obtains salvation, he will never be the same again. He becomes a new person. His attitude towards life undergoes a dramatic change.

Having projected the new birth of Sarah, he expects the readers to know that Christ alone can transform a sinner and offer him a new birth. The Biblical concept of the new birth gets reflected in this novel. Through the new birth the sinner who has been saved enters into a new world. Billy Graham in his book World Aflame says, “The change that comes over a man is expressed in The Bible in various contrasts: lust and holiness, darkness and light, death and resurrection, a stranger to the kingdom of God. The man who has experienced the new birth is called the member of God’s household” (143). All these changes have taken place in the life of Sarah. Her will is changed, her objectives for living are changed, her disposition is changed, her
affections are changed and her purpose and meaning in her life have also undergone a change. Such a transformed life can only spring from placing one’s trust in the saving grace of God. *The Bible* tells of many men who have been changed by an encounter with Christ. In the Gospel according to St. Luke one can find a man who has been demon-possessed for a long time. The demon often takes control of the man so that even when he is chained he simply breaks them. But when he meets Christ, he is changed and is found in his right sense. No longer is he in the grip of satanic power. No longer is he a menace to the community. He becomes a changed man in character, dress, and contact and even in environment. Thus, Sarah also experiences all these changes in her life.

In the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke Jesus meets Zacchaeus who has defrauded the people as a tax-gatherer. The moment he encounters Jesus, he becomes a changed man. He proceeds to make restitutions. “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount”* (Luke 19:8). These encounters with Christ result in an instantaneous transformation. The demon-possessed man and Zacchaeus became a new creation soon after they met Christ. The same sort of change has taken place in the life of Sarah as well.

Another noteworthy aspect of this novel is that Greene depicts God as one who is eager to have fellowship with the sinners of the world. Neil Mc Evan, in his book *Graham Greene* says, “*The End of the Affair* glimpses Greene’s God as one who is hungry for human love” (72). God always longs to gather His children together ‘as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings’*(Luke 13:34). He is willing to offer salvation to any sinner as a free gift. But one must respond to it by praying to God as Sarah does. In order to experience the love of God one must humble oneself by virtue of confession. One can find humility in the prayer offered to God by
Sarah. “Dear God, I am no use. I’m still the same bitch and fake. Clean me out of the way” (EA 121).

When a sinner opens the door of his heart to God and invites Him into his life, he is able to experience the highest form of joy. When God comes into the heart of a sinner he becomes a saint no matter how terrible his sins are. Having committed her life to Christ, Sarah becomes a saint. And after her death a series of miracles occur. An atheist who had been preaching against Christ has now become a strong believer. He starts preaching the love of Christ. God’s offering of salvation to sinners does not stop anywhere. Instead it goes on like a never ending stream. The greatest miracle that God performs is to transform many sinners into saints day by day. Wilhelm Hortmann in his book *Graham Greene: The Burnt-out Catholic* says, “Miracles may happen even in our time God may make His power felt in the most unlikely circumstances. He may lavish His grace on a most unlikely sinner and turn him into a saint” (70).

The point that Greene unconsciously makes in this novel is that as long as the human race exists in this world, God will continue to perform countless miracles of transforming the sinners into saints. In order to obtain the free gift of salvation man should come to Christ humbling himself. There is not any other means by which man can find salvation. The apostle Peter says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by whom we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Lamba in his book *Graham Greene: His Mind and Art* reiterates the same thing. “God is loving and merciful. Unless His grace sanctifies a sinner, there cannot be any redemption” (64).

Although salvation is offered to undeserving sinners as a free gift of God, there are certain conditions the sinners have to abide by. They should acknowledge that Christ alone has
the authority and ability to save them. Salvation is bestowed on man purely by the grace of God. Therefore, no one can intend to attain it by his good works or with his own efforts. Man should believe in the mercy of God and directly pray to Him by admitting his sinful deeds so that God’s loving arms will be stretched towards him. Making a personal commitment with God is the first step in the journey of spiritual life. This is what Sarah does in *The End of the Affair*. God who longs for the love of man cannot but show His mercy upon the sinners who consciously confess their sins. The joy of salvation cannot be compared with any of the worldly possessions. No human words can describe it. Just as Sarah, who was once a harlot, becomes worthy of receiving God’s forgiving love any sinner can get an access to God.

And finally, Greene enables the readers to visualize that it is a sinner who loves God more than a man of righteousness. “He who has been forgiven little loves little” (Luke 7:47). Like Sarah who started loving God by abandoning her relationship with Bendrix, every sinner who tastes God’s forgiving love will stop loving the things pertaining to the world and start loving their saviour with all their heart, with all their soul and with their entire mind as Sarah does. All the heroes of faith in *The Bible* are the once who have been lifted up from the mire of sin. Just because they were saved from the most wretched condition of their sins, they could best preach the love of God. Sarah’s life too best preaches the love of God. There is no doubt about it.

In *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair*, the protagonists deserve the forgiveness of sin because they repent of their evil ways by confessing them to God. But in *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie commits suicide and thereby he becomes unworthy to receive salvation. Yet Greene presents his character as one who deserves being forgiven by God’s mercy. Honestly speaking, it is really beyond belief. In order to understand Greene’s concept of forgiveness one has to catch a glimpse of the words spoken by God to Moses. “I will have mercy
on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on which I have compassion” (Romans 9:15).

When God who is rich in His mercy accepts the unpardonable sinners no one has the right to find fault with them. What one can understand from The Heart of the Matter is that there is no boundary for God’s forgiving love. Moreover, it cannot be explained in human language. Once Peter asked Jesus, “Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Upto seven times? Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times but seventy seven times” (Matt. 18:21-22). Figuratively speaking ‘seventy seven times’ means innumerable times. Perhaps Greene’s argument in this novel is that God who is an epitome of compassion cannot reject any sinner. His forgiving love can operate even in the life of people like Scobie whose condition is hopeless through and through.

Greene wrote The Heart of the Matter during the time when people of the West were attaching less importance to things pertaining to spiritual values. Peter Mudford in his book Graham Greene says, “By the time Greene came to write this novel, Christianity was fast losing its cultural force in the west” (36). Therefore one can discern that Greene aimed at reviving the Christian faith while weaving the plot of the novel. Probably he would have conceived such an idea in himself that people would easily be touched by a novel that portrays boundless mercy of God rather than a novel that shows the wrath of God. The Bible depicts God both as an embodiment of love and as a consuming fire. But what is more soothing to the heart of the people is that “God is love” (I John 4:16). If God’s forgiving love is presented to the readers with fictitious ideas in a novel they would certainly read and find it edifying. When people with a lot of conflicts in life read such a novel, they will make a new beginning in their life by placing their trust in God who accepts the sinners in whatever situations they are. The biblical truth that God’s
mercy is capable of accepting even the worst sinners of the world is like a healing balm to the people who find themselves in a great deal of spiritual ailments.

This novel deals with a righteous man, Major Scobie, a Christian, who loves God and follows the teachings of the Church in his own way. By force of circumstances he commits the sin of adultery and latter that of committing suicide. He is thus damned in the opinion of orthodox believers. It’s quite easy for people to pass on critical judgments regarding a man as soon as he indulges in sinful acts. But God has a fair deal with him according to his inner intention that reveals what sort of person he is. What Greene seems to tell the readers in this novel is that God’s way of dealing with a sinner cannot be intellectually understood by mortal men with their limited knowledge. God says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).

Strictly speaking, Scobie’s sin of committing suicide is the worst sin a sinner can ever commit in his life. But in Father Rank’s unconventional view Scobie loved God and deserved His mercy. Since the church does not understand what goes on in the heart of a man, it is unable to appreciate his predicament and his being entitled to God’s mercy. Thus, the novel presents typically a Christian situation as viewed from a novel or unconventional angle. As soon as Scobie commits suicide, people around him reckon that he will certainly go to hell and will be eternally damned. But Father Rank has an entirely different opinion with regard to Scobie. He believes that Scobie deserves God’s mercy because he loved God and had unshakable faith in Him. He justifies by saying, “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 306).
Perhaps the words of Father Rank express Greene’s own opinion about God’s way of judging a sinner. Father Rank is a divinely ordained priest committed to preaching God’s word without distorting it. What he really tries to tell Scobie’s wife is that no one can hastily pass on judgment and label a sinner as unpardonable. In God’s sight even the worst sinner may probably deserve to obtain salvation. Louise is terribly upset that her husband Scobie has committed suicide and thereby he has died with a sin of despair. Being a Christian, she is not able to tolerate it. According to The Bible if a Christian encounters death he has the privilege of inheriting the eternal life promised by Christ. After his death his loved ones can find comfort in the hope of eternity. Now in the sight of Louise, Scobie deserves eternal condemnation as he has put an end to his own life against the biblical principles.

There cannot be a greater pain for a Christian wife than not having the assurance that she would meet him in eternity. Being inconsolable, she goes to Father Rank and says, “Father, haven’t you any comfort to give me” (HM 305). One can picture what sort of feeling she would have experienced deep within herself after Scobie’s life has ended on a note of despair. Now Father Rank says to her,

“For goodness’ sake, Mrs. Scobie, don’t imagine you – are

I - know a thing about God’s mercy.

The Church says…..

I know the Church says.

The church knows all the rules.

But it does not know what goes on in a single human heart” (HM 306).
What Father Rank intends to say is “The Lord does not look at things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart”. God’s mercy is transcendental. One cannot clearly comprehend the inner intention of Scobie at the time of his death. Since he is a staunch believer in Christ, chances are there for him to taste the gift of eternal life in heaven. The implication in this novel with regard to Scobie is that before he had breathed his last a possible repentance could have taken place in his life. In order to support this opinion, one can cite an example from the prayer offered constantly by Scobie right before his death. The terms like ‘O God’ and ‘Dear God’ were constantly on his lips prior to his death. It indicates the fact that he loved God and had faith in Him. Somehow, he has made a wrong decision to commit suicide. Hell is meant only for the unbelievers. Scobie is quite apparently a believer. Therefore, he might be a recipient of God’s mercy and get into eternal life.

In order to substantiate the views of Father Rank one can refer to the episode of Samson’s life. Just like Scobie, he committed the sin of adultery. He found himself being entangled in the web of adultery with Delilah. Under her influence the rulers of Philistians bound with bronze shackles. He pleaded with God to strengthen him so that he would be able to cause the death of Philistines and that of himself. God strengthened him as per his earnest appeal. He said, “Let me die with the Philistines! Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus, he killed many more when he died than while he lived”(Judg. 16:30).

Samson’s shining moment occurs when he dies. Though he has failed in his original mission, God showers His mercy upon him. Of course Samson was a sinner but he never lost his faith in God. By force of circumstances he has sinned against God. A father never disowns his son just because he commits certain mistakes in his life. Similarly God cannot reject Samson and
people like Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* who continue to believe in Him. His love is unchanging love. Father Rank says, “It’s better to sin seventy times and repent each time than sin once and never repent” (HM 245). Since Scobie has expressed genuine sorrow over his sins he is really worthy to be saved by God’s boundless mercy.

Since Greene projects Scobie, who has committed suicide, as a recipient of God’s mercy, one should not jump to a wrong conclusion that he justifies the act of committing suicide. In order to depict the immeasurable death of God’s forgiving love by fictitious ideas, he has woven the plot of the novel in such a way that Scobie commits suicide at the end. He purposefully allows the readers to reckon that Scobie is sure to go to hell. It is in such a hopeless situation that Father Rank emerges and gives a vivid picture on God’s mercy to Louise. When the readers find how Father Rank presents Scobie as one upon whom God shows His mercy, they are prone to place their trust in Christ who forgives the sins of all mankind. If God can give salvation to Scobie, the most deplorable sinner, then it will be certainly easier for him to accept any sinner in the world.

The first thing that makes Scobie worthy of receiving salvation is his faith in Christ. The second important thing that makes him worthy of God’s mercy is his love for others. Conor Cruise O’ Brien in his book *Maria Cross* describes Scobie’s story as “The record of an attempt to imitate Christ and his pity as a simulacrum of the passion” (76). Scobie loves others more than he loves himself. The kind of love that he shows upon others is absolutely selfless that symbolically stands for the love of Christ. Scobie’s attempt to love human beings nearly as God loved them, exemplifies the commandment of Jesus: “My commandment is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). According to *The Bible*, love is the greatest virtue a believer can ever have in his life. Paul says, “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the
greatest of these is love” (I Cor. 13:13). John in his first epistle says, “Love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God” (I John 4:7).

When the character of Scobie is weighed in the light of the scriptures, it seems he really deserves salvation despite the sins he has committed. Kulshrestha says, “Scobie’s contact and morals exemplify the Pauline doctrine of the extreme form of human love, a willingness to save others through his damnation” (HM 112). Paul says, “For I could wish that I myself were cursed for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3). Though Scobie is aware of his eternal damnation a sense of forgiveness seems to attend his loving self-sacrifice. “We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Hereby we pursue the love of God because He laid down His life for us: and we are to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John 3:14-16). These verses clearly state that a man who loves others is worthy of finding favour from God’s sight and inheriting eternal life because he has obeyed the commandment of God. It is appropriated to look at the last incomplete phrase uttered by Scobie a few seconds prior to his death. The readers are made to feel that he has committed his spirit into the hands of God. The last word that comes out of his mouth right before his death is: “Dear God, I love….” (HM 299). It is an incomplete sentence uttered by Scobie before he breathed his last. It implies the fact that Scobie made an effort to pray to God even at that critical moment.

It is left to the imagination of the readers as to what he would have actually spoken to God before breathing his last. It is certain that he loved Christ and others without any selfish motives. This is what is instrumental in drawing him close to God. God’s redeeming love operates in the life of miserable sinners like Scobie echoes the words of God in Isaiah. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they
shall be like wool”(Isa. 1:18). In the sight of man the sins of Scobie are like scarlet but God in His mercy has made them as white as snow. Another verse that portrays His forgiving love is also in the same book. “I, even I, Am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more”(Isa. 43:25). God has blotted out Scobie’s transgressions. As a result, his sins will no longer be remembered by Him. The forgiving arms of God have embraced him. Through this novel Greene exhorts the readers that no one should consider a sinner as unpardonable and worthy to be thrown into hell. He wants to instill in the minds of the readers that God’s judgments are unsearchable and His paths are beyond tracing out. Since God is an embodiment of mercy, His mercy triumphs over judgment.

In Brighton Rock, Greene shows how God looks for a sinner. For this purpose he depicts the life of a young Christian boy named Pinkie. During his youthhood he commits his life to become a priest. But as days go by his passion for doing the pastoral work gets diminished. His inclination to spiritual matters has declined. He wants to make use of his position as Kite’s successor with a primary objective of gaining status and influence. Thus, he shifts his focus from the love of God to that of the worldly possessions. Having caused the death of Hale, he enters into a fake marriage with a young waitress named Rose to prevent her from revealing his crime.

Rose is also a pious Christian. Her spiritual zeal has vanished after marrying Pinkie. Despite the fact that both Pinkie and Rose had gone too far away from God, the love of God continues to chase them. Thus, Greene proclaims the biblical truth of God going after the lost sheep under the disguise of Pinkie who is the protagonist of the novel. Luke depicts how God goes after the lost sheep in his Gospel. Similarly here in this novel God’s love continuously chases Pinkie. Pinkie knows the scriptures very well. He knows all the hymns. There were times when he was an active participant in the church activities. In a conversation with Rose, he makes
the reader catch a glimpse of his former spiritual status. “I was in a choir once, the Boy confided, and began to sing softly in his spoilt boy’s voice: ‘Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem’. In his voice the whole lost world moved” (BR 53).

Pinkie is fond of this hymn. “It is the hymn from the Latin mass: ‘Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grants us peace’ (BR 17). This hymn is sung during the Holy Communion in the churches across the world. Pinkie knows pretty well that Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of all mankind. Besides believing that Christ alone can save a man from his sinful life, he is aware of the eternal condemnation that is meant for the ungodly. He says, “Of course there’s Hell, flames and damnation” (BR 53). Despite the fact that all the biblical truths are deeply embedded in his mind, he starts developing an aspiration for power. Like Faustus, he wants to rise above the level of humanity. Therefore, he has buried all his passion in the religious matters. But still he believes in God. On one hand Greene shows the life of a Christian who has backslidden in this novel. On the other hand he projects Ida whose aim is to bring Pinkie to justice because the latter has caused the death of Hale. Unlike Pinkie, Ida has no faith in God at all. She is an atheist. She sets her focus on establishing her own ideals.

The philosophy of Greene is that a sinner who believes in God is far better than an atheist who expresses no faith in God. He is of the opinion that there is a possibility for a sinner to turn away from his evil ways at any time and become a recipient of God’s mercy. Thus, he can be saved even if he repents a few seconds before his death whereas in the case an atheist, the prospect of salvation is not possible. In order to destroy Rose once for all, Pinkie persuades her to enter into a fake agreement to commit suicide together. Pinkie has an intention of putting an end to Rose’s life alone by such an evil plan. But Ida saves Rose from the clutches of Pinkie and the police breaks the bottle of vitriol kept by Pinkie and let it spray into Pinkie’s face. Howling
with pain, burnt by his own vitriol, Pinkie turns, runs toward the edge of the cliff close by, and hurls himself over and into the sea. Just as in *The Heart of the Matter*, the readers are made to feel that Pinkie deserves eternal condemnation because he is a backslidden Christian. But Greene is careful not to exclude the possibility of forgiveness to Pinkie. Since Pinkie is a believer in God, he is sure to find mercy in the sight of God. In *The Heart of the Matter*, Father Rank acted as Greene’s mouthpiece to reveal the greatness of God’s mercy. In the same way in *Brighton Rock*, a priest is used as his mouthpiece to proclaim that God’s mercy and his forgiving love are as vast as an ocean.

After the death of Pinkie, Rose is left all alone in a state of utter hopelessness. When she meets the priest the latter says, “You can’t conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone – the .... appalling … strangeness of the mercy of God”(*BR* 249). In order to expound the magnitude of God’s forgiving love, the priest gives an illustration. “There was a man, a French man, and he lived in sin all through his life, because he couldn’t bear the idea that any soul could suffer damnation….. this man decided that if any soul was going to be damned, he would be damned too. He never took, the sacraments, he never married his wife in Church. I don’t know, my child, but some people think he was – well, a saint. I think he died in what we are told is mortal sin – I’m not sure”(*BR* 248-249).

A historical book titled *Graham Greene and the Legend of Peguy* says, “The anonymous French man to whom the priest refers is in fact Charles Peguy. There is truth in all the priest says: Peguy did lose faith over the question of damnation, undergoing a long and painful spiritual crisis during which he refused to be reconciled with a god who permitted the prediction of any soul”(138 – 139). Greene’s argument with regard to this episode is that if God can save the French man, why can’t He save the sinner like Pinkie? In the theological sense of the word
‘Grace’ means, among other things, the unmerited divine love which stoops to pardon and bless the guilty. It was God’s ways that justified the thief who was crucified beside Christ and made him an eligible person to enter into the kingdom of God. The thief never practises any Christian values. He had never experienced the love of God by prayer and meditation. Yet, while hanging on the cross he said, “Jesus remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). On hearing the humble prayer of the thief, Jesus immediately offered him a promise that he would reign with him in eternity. The thief does not even know what salvation is. Peguy, the French man, too lived in mortal sin. But God in His mercy stretches his loving arms towards them and bestowed forgiveness on people like Peguy and Pinkie.

It is amazing to note that Pinkie becomes worthy of God’s forgiving love on the grounds that he has faith in God while Ida does not taste God’s forgiving love because she is an atheist. According to Greene, life with Christ is an endless hope but life without Him is a hopeless end. People like Ida cannot even have a glimmer of hope in their life. The life of a man who remains steadfast in his faith will surely end on a note of hope. In all these four novels the protagonists are far away from the path of salvation. But Greene projects them as the recipients of salvation. In his view, if salvation is provided only to the people who are known for their good deeds, then there will be no room for God’s grace to work in the life of the sinners. The greatest need of every man born in this world is peace. A guilty conscience seldom finds rest. But those who accept God’s forgiving love are liberated to live and die in peace. The peace dwells deep within the heart and it is available even during troubling times – even when death confronts us. The hymn writer Horatio G. Spafford in the book titled *Church Hymnal* says, “When peace like a river attendeth my soul, when sorrow’s like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, ‘it is well, it is well with my soul’” (243). A believer’s soul knows this incredible