CHAPTER II
MANIFESTATION OF EVIL AS REFLECTED IN THE
SELECTED POEMS

This chapter analyses the poet’s projection evil in human life which the Bible terms as sin, pride, hypocrisy, wickedness, adultery, worldly pleasure, vanity and others.

Evil is a broad term used to indicate a negative moral or ethical act, often used to describe intentional acts that are cruel, unjust and harmful. Evil is usually contrasted with good, the latter is manifested in intentional acts that are kind, just and unselfish.

According to the Bible evil actions are those that fall short of God’s standard of holiness. It states clearly that people are born sinful. This is a consequence of the fall of man in the garden of Eden. In the New Testament Jesus Christ taught that sin is conceived in the human heart and will, Apostle Paul taught about the solution for sinful life is the new life that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Many Khasi poets have expressed the terrible effects of sin which are manifested in its various forms as price, hypocrisy, wickedness, adultery etc.

10 Mat 6:22-23
2.1.1. SIN

Generally speaking sin is a "transgression against moral or religious law or divine authority". In a religious context it is described as an act that violates a moral rule, or the state of having committed such a violation. Commonly, the moral code of conduct is decreed by a divine entity. Sin is often used to mean an action that is prohibited or considered wrong; in some religions sin can refer to a state of mind rather than a specific action. In practical life, any thought, word, or act considered immoral, shameful, harmful, or alienating might be termed "sinful".

The seed of disobedience was sown in man's choice to disobey God, His sinful act of rebellion still affects the world. Sin is thus the violation of an objective and absolute standard or code of behavior established by God. We almost instinctively see this as an infringement on our rights. Yet such an attitude displays a terrible misunderstanding of sin and an underestimation of God's holiness. The Bible teaches that God is concerned about sin not to limit man's freedom and enjoyment of life but because sin is a disease of the soul that destroys lives and leads to spiritual death.

Most of the selected poets in the study reflect on the destructive nature of sin and how it can destroy all of creation through its many manifestation.

^32 The New International Webster’s Student Dictionary of the English Language, 2006, New Delhi p 683
H.W. Sten’s masterpiece Ka Burom Ba La Jah is to a certain extent a reflection of the Biblical narrative of the fall of man. According to the Bible, the original plan of God for man was to rule and have dominion over all creation. Consequently, man lost the privilege of being a ruler over the whole earth. When mankind fell, he not only lost dominion over everything placed under him but he also lost his intimate fellowship with God. As a result man “comes short of the glory of God”.

Book I of Sten’s poem deals mostly with demons, their strange features, their dwelling places and their works. The demons portrayed by the poet affect not the physical body of man but his soul due to Pride, Gluttony, Envy, Hypocrisy, Hatred, Adultery, Arrogance, Anger, Doubt, Selfishness, etc.

In the introductory lines Sten shows the reason why man lost his glory, which is strongly reminiscent of the Book of Genesis in the Bible.

BU BRIEW u tiew pyrshah hukum u Blei.
(Because man transgresses against the commandment of God)

And in another lines of the poem, Sten further sings:

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33 Gen 3:14-24
34 Rom 3:23
Ka Duk ka hiar pateng haduh ha ngi,
Ka Pang, Jynjar, Sngewish ruh bad Khuslai
Ki sah bad ngi haduh ba wai jingim
(Thus Poverty, Sickness, Affliction, Sorrow and Anxiety continue to afflict us till the end of our life)

God is not the source of adversity. It was not part of God’s plan for man to face sickness and pain. It is clear that God never intended man to experience the problems and sorrow brought about as a consequence of sin. Adversity, sickness and death are the result of sin.35

2.1.2. PRIDE

Pride is basically a sin of attitude in the heart and mind of a person. Pride is cited in the two lists of the most glaring sins in the Bible. The Bible calls pride a sin36. Alongside other sins, God is going to judge and punish human beings for their insolence, arrogance, and boasting37. Included with the sins that will be prevalent in the last days, Apostle Paul warn of the sin of boasting, arrogance, and conceit38.

As with many of the sins of attitude, pride cannot remain internalized. It can infect one’s speech; boasting is one way by which this sin manifested. Pride may also take the

35 Rom 5:12
36 Pro 21:4
37 Rom 1:30
38 2 Tim 3:2-4
ugly form of contemptible treatment of others\textsuperscript{39}. An illustration of this sin in the Bible is seen in the way the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders treated and spoke of those beneath their social level\textsuperscript{40}. They especially despised tax collectors and "sinners".

Pride can bring about the downfall not only of individuals but also of nations. In the light of the preceding discussion, it is not surprising to read in the Bible that pride is one of the most deadly sins that a Christian has to overcome\textsuperscript{41}.

A Khasi prominent poet Jerome Diengdoh in his poem "Ngi La Stad Than" (We are too wise), condemns the sin of pride and contends that the wisdom of man is nothing in comparison to the wisdom of God.

"Na jingthaw blei wat la ngi stad than
Ngi dei ki jingthaw briel bla thaw bein tam"
(We are more intelligent than most of God’s creature, yet we are still the most flawed of all).

Through the above lines, the poet justifies the guidance of God over man’s wisdom. So it is foolish for man to consider with pride that he is self-sufficient when in reality he still remains a creature dependent on the goodness of God. This is because the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of

\textsuperscript{39} Pro 21:24
\textsuperscript{40} Mat 23:5-12; John 9:34
\textsuperscript{41} Pro 6:17
men; and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of men. It also says that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”\(^{42}\).

Another poet, Firmly Star Lyngdoh expresses the view that some people are willing to sacrifice their land because of selfishness and pride. According to him, such people will face a terrible judgment on the judgment day. In his poem “lano ngi kham iet”\(^{43}\) (Whom do we love” when he writes –

“Hynrei ka spah ka nam rongphong
Ryngkat ruh bad ka ktien sarong;
Ki pynmatlah pynban iangi,
Wat la ka Ri kan thung baji
Kine ki lai ki ap iangi,
Ba ha kata ka akher ka sngi
Ban pyniap khop ia jingim briew
Kan niat Khyndai pateng ba ngiew”
(But riches, fame and proud boasting have blinded our eyes to the extent that we are ready to destroy our land. These three things will await to condemn us in the day of judgment)

In these lines the poet shows the danger of love for riches, fame and pride when these are allowed to rule a man’s life. The Bible states that world’s riches belong to God and no

\(^{42}\) 1 Cor 1:25; 1 Cor 3:19
\(^{43}\) F.S. Lyngdoh, lano ngi kham iet lines -
man can boast about it\textsuperscript{44}. Moreover, love of wealth (money) is the root of all evil; it often leads to pride and even to rebelling against God\textsuperscript{45}. The poet expresses the Biblical teaching on the danger of greedy that usually leads people to destruction and grief.

All those who are deceived by wealth, fame and pride will one day face a fierce judgment. That judgment will decide their fate to doom. It is called the day of wrath\textsuperscript{46}. It will be a day of destruction\textsuperscript{47}. The judgment in that day will be for all the evil actions committed during one's lifetime. The wicked shall be condemned on the judgment day\textsuperscript{48}.

The poet also shows the adverse effects of proud words. The Bible speaks much about the importance of spoken words\textsuperscript{49}. Lyngdoh shows the painful effects of harsh and proud words to those whom they are addressed. Sometimes proud words hurt the listener and pierce him like a sword\textsuperscript{50}.

Bevan Lionel Swer in his poem "Ka Jingsngewrit" (Humility) while exhorting humility as an importance Christian virtue, concludes that one can understand and

\textsuperscript{44} Hag 2:8
\textsuperscript{45} 1Tim 6:10; Ezek 28:5 Hos 12:8; Neh 9:25,26
\textsuperscript{46} Rom 2:5 Rev 6:17
\textsuperscript{47} Job 21:30
\textsuperscript{48} Eccl 12:14 1Cor 4:5; Math 7:22,23 25:41
\textsuperscript{49} Pro 6:2; 10:20; 10:31
\textsuperscript{50} Pro 12:18
practice humility when one knows the evil of arrogance and pride. Thus he writes –

> haei yn shemphang ia jingsngewrit haba kam lah ban sngewthuh kaei ka leheh lehmeng (how can one understand humility when one does not know what is arrogance).

Pride is opposite to humility. It is offensive to God and to Christ.\(^{51}\) It often originates in self-righteousness\(^{52}\); religious privileges\(^{53}\), unsanctified knowledge\(^{54}\) It is the characteristic of the devil\(^{55}\), of false teachers\(^{56}\); and of the wicked\(^{57}\). It leads men to hold in contempt and to reject God’s words\(^{58}\) and commandments.\(^{59}\) Pride is always followed by shame\(^{60}\); and destruction\(^{61}\).

### 2.1.3. HYPOCRISY

Originally, a “hypocrite” refers to a speaker or an actor who interpreted the words of a poet or the music of a composer on the stage. The actor, or hypocrite, tries to make the music or words intelligible to the audience. A good

\(^{51}\) Pro 6:16, 17 16:5:8; 12,13
\(^{52}\) Luk 18:11,12
\(^{53}\) Zeph3:11
\(^{54}\) 1Cor 8:1
\(^{55}\) 1Tim3:6
\(^{56}\) 1Tim6:3,4
\(^{57}\) Hab2:4,5 Rom 1:30
\(^{58}\) Jer43:2
\(^{59}\) Pro13:10 28:25
\(^{60}\) Pro 11:2
\(^{61}\) Pro16:18 18:12
“hypocrite” faithfully interpreted his assigned role, while an undesirable “hypocrite” did not do such a good acting job. Because of the word’s essential neutrality, accompanying words were necessary for people to understand if it was being used positively or negatively.

In Christian faith hypocrisy is the act of pretending to be what one is not, especially the false appearance of being religious or virtuous. The modern understanding among Christians of the word “hypocrisy” is determined by its use in the New Testament, especially as taught by Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, hypocrisy most often means deceit, misrepresenting the truth, or claiming virtues or qualities that one does not possess.

With regard to the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus Christ saw a blatant contrast between their outward forms of righteousness and their failure to embrace the true spirit of Jewish beliefs like mercy, justice, humility, forgiveness, and love toward the unlovely. They hid their failure in this matter behind pious appearances62. However, inside their hearts, they were full of greed and wickedness63. Thus hypocrisy refers to a person who presents an outward appearance of righteousness but one who is full of wickedness on the inside64.

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62 Mar 7:1-13
63 Luk 11:39
64 Mat 23:28
Jesus Christ condemns hypocrisy because it distorts God's righteous commands. Rather than pursue an authentic inward holiness, hypocrites distort righteousness into a rigid mold whose chief use was to show off in front of people.

E. Weston Dkhar in giving the title of the poem "Khristan Ka Nam" (Christian in name) focuses on the growing number of so-called Christians in the Church. Such types of Christians are found even at the level of Church leadership. It is possible to claim to be Christian and at the same time to practice unchristian acts. Weston Dkhar recalls the history of Christianity in Shella and relates how later the people witnessed the emergence of nominal Christians. First of all he recalled the spirit of true Christianity in the village in the past. Unfortunately, during the course of time, the poet found that some selfish people took advantage of being Christians. For instance, they noticed that by becoming Christians, they stand to win court cases more easily because their Christian relatives are people holding high office. The poet feels that the presence of such Christians in the church brings the sanctity of the church into danger.

*Suri batriem kup snieh langbrot,
Ki sma dien Khla ki sma rakot;
Ki leh mynleh khlem kheiň ka sang
Ka phrung shaduh jaka kyntang* 

*(Like fearful wolves in sheep clothing, they scent the footprints of tiger and dragon. Abhorring sacrifice, they...*)

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65 Mat 23:2-7
pretend to be righteous and tread without any pang of conscience the sacred place).

This view is based from the New Testament were such people were inveighed against by Jesus Christ. He warns them to beware of false prophets and false teachers; for these would pretend to foretell of things to come and who set themselves up as teachers of others. In this poem the poet refers to such Christians leaders, who sit in the pulpit of the church, and teach innocent believers on holiness and righteousness while their own life shows how repugnant they are to the word of God.

The poet seems to compare such people to the Pharisees of the New Testament who always pretended to be holy and righteous, humble and modest but inwardly they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity, of rapine oppression, and covetousness; and under pretence of religion, "devoured widows houses". In order to get the good-will and affection of the people, they clothed themselves not in garments made of sheep's wool, but like wolves in the very skins of sheep with the wool on them, imitated the true prophets and the holy men of old. They pretend to possess great humility, and self-denial, and so "wore a rough garment to deceive" when they were inwardly greedy and full of covetousness.

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66 Math 7:15; 10:16
67 2Pet 2:1
68 Zech 13:4
2.1.4. WICKEDNESS

Wickedness is defined as the absence of moral or spiritual values; “the powers of darkness”. It is morally objectionable behavior.69

Trying to give excuse in order to escape the blame for oneself, E.Weston Dkhar in the last line of “Iano Phin Kynnoh Pop?” (Whom you will blame for?) reveals the consequences of sinful nature which lies in the inside of man.

"Ka jingbymman ka pynkha, ka juk ki riew kynsha"
(Sin, gives birth to a generation of wicked people)

Sinful acts such as lust, greed and corrupt practices are pleasing to a sinful generation and instead of resisting and rejecting such acts, the people accept and cherish it in their life. Thus, the new generation will have been concerned and mentioned in such sinful practices.

For as the Bible says, when lust is conceived, it brings forth sin. And sin, when it is fully formed, brings forth death70.

When men have been all their days in the service of sin, and have fought under its banners, the wages they will earn,

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70 Jas 1:15
and the reward that will be given them, will be death and a more sinful generation.

2.1.5. ADULTERY AND FORNICATION

The issues of adultery relate to sex but in a much more profound level, they relate to marriage vows and faithfulness. Marriage vows concern faithful commitment to one person, just as man’s vows to God concern his faithfulness to him. The Biblical principle on marriage is a holy, sanctified relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church. Human marriage is based on that kind of commitment. Thus as they remain faithful to each other, they understand more of what it means to be faithful to God. This faithfulness allows them to share an intimacy and a common purpose that is not possible in casual relationships. The vow starts with God’s promise that He will never leave his people nor forsake them. In the same manner, he expects that same kind and degree of commitment between married couple. The sexual dimensions of human love are God’s provision for marital joy and bliss and to find expression in a most unique, rich, rewarding way that reflects man’s relationship with God.

In his *Ki Siej Khongpong* (Downward bamboos), E.Weston Dkhar touches certain important biblical truths and themes such as adultery and judgment for sinful deeds.
As a Christian, Dkhar knows well that the mysterious things can not happen without a cause. For the bamboos to grow upside down, there must be something mysterious somewhere. He could not create the poem without first asking God to help him understand. When the poem was written, the theme projected was the love between Manik and Mahadei.

As in the folktale, on which this poem is based, Manik and Mahadei knew each other from their childhood. They used to play together in the fields where cows were grazing. They also spent times in catching small fishes, plucking fruits and playing together in the hills. It appears that their love was strongly bounded until the King came into the scene and took away the girl to make her his queen. After their marriage the King left for his political tour outside the kingdom, leaving his wife behind. Troubled by loneliness in the palace, Mahadei became terribly desperate. On one silent night as she was sitting alone, she heard the sweet but familiar music coming to her ears. She left the palace and followed the music till she reached the hut where Manik was playing his flute on that silent and solemn night. Reaching there reminded Mahadei of their happy childhood. That was when she boldly decided to enter inside his hut by fair means or foul. In verse 31 and 119 we find such expressions through the lips of Mahadei when she says –

*Kumba lelihe h’u lyoh ka klik,
Suki suki dohnud jong ka ktik;*
Shapoh ki kper jinglong khynnah, 
Ka plied syrtap jingdum ba kah”
(Like lightning flashing in the cloud, Slowly it touches her heart;
Back to the garden of childhood, She opened the darkened part)

“Nga iet ia phi naduh nyngkong
Hapoh u Dek ban shet khongpong?
(I love you from the beginning Inside the pot for betraying?)

The poet make the story, which similar to a love story recorded in the Bible in the Book of Songs of Solomon where King Solomon brought a Shunamite girl to the place and tried to win her love for him. Yet in spite of his adoration and courtesy, the girl always spoke about her young lover. It was the shepherd boy whom she had given her heart since their childhood71.

In verse 51 of the Poem, E.Weston Dkhar depicts Manik’s weakness when he succumbed to the wiles of Mahadei. It is not surprising when a man and woman fell into temptation when they together in such a time and place like Manik and Mahadei. The poet writes how this adulterous relationship culminated into a sexual act.

71 Songs 4:16; 7:10
"U kyndok jnem* harud ka dpei,
Suki u rkhiang kynsan u bthei,
(As wet sulphur placed by the open hearth becomes dry
and catches fire before exploding)

By nature man is vulnerable to the sexual enticing of a
woman. When he decides to play along with such
temptations, he is actually playing with fire. The Bible clearly
reveals the problem to escape when one plays with lust.72

2.1.7. VANITY

Vanity means something that is vain, empty or
valueless. It is also a scene or place characterized by frivolity
and ostentation. Biblically speaking, vanity is a consequence
of the fall. The thoughts, beauty and the days of man are
vanities. Worldly wisdom, pleasure, anxiety, labour,
enjoyment and worldly possessions are all vanities73. Vanities
also include all earthly things, foolish questions, religion of
hypocrites, idolatry alms giving without charity74.

True, substantial good is not to be found in any thing
liable to change and corruption. Vanity- not only vain, but
vanity in the abstract, which denotes extreme vanity. It

72 Pr 6:27
73 Rom 8:20 ; Ps 94:11; Job 7:16 Eccl 6:12 ; 2:15,21; 2:1, 11; 4:4; Ps 39:11 Pr
31:30; 1Cor 3:20; Ps 39:6 127:2
74 Ecc 1:2 ; 1Tim 1:6,7 6:20 2Tim 2:14,16 Tit 3:9, James 1:26: 1 Cor 13:3
contains the general proposition, to demonstrate that all worldly things is invain. It is vanity- not in themselves for they are God's creatures and therefore good in their kinds, but in reference to that happiness, which men seek and expect to find in them. So they are unquestionably vain, because they are not what they seem to be, and perform not what they promise, but instead of that are the occasions of innumerable cares, and fears, and sorrows, and mischiefs. They are not only vanity but vanity of vanities, vanity in the highest degree.

In his "Tang Jingthala" (ALL VANITY), E.W Dkhar summarises the vanity of things in the life of man. Every thing that man does in this life seems to be worst and invain. The last lines of second stanza says

Ka jingthala jong ki jingthala baroh tang ka jingthala
(Vanity of vanity all are vanities)

The line is alluded from the saying of the wisest of the wise man, Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon, having made trial of natural wisdom and knowledge in its utmost extent, and found it to be vanity, proceeds to the experiment of pleasure, and tries whether any happiness was in that. As for that which at first sight was vain, frothy, and frolicsome, he dispatches at once, and condemns it as mad and unprofitable; but as for those pleasure which were more manly, rational, and lawful, he dwells upon them, and gives a particular enumeration of them, as what he had made full
trial of; as good eating and drinking, in a moderate way, without abuse; fine and spacious building; delightful vineyards, gardens and orchards; parks forest, and enclosures; fish pools, and fountains of water; a large retinue, and equipage of servants; great possessions, immense riches and treasure; a collection of the greatest rarities, and curiosities in nature; all kinds of music, vocal and instrumental, in all which he exceeded any that went before him; nor did he deny himself of any pleasure, in a lawful way, that could possibly be enjoyed. And yet on a survey of the whole, and after a through experience of what could be found herein, he pronounces all vanity and vexation of spirit and returns again to his former subject, wisdom; and looks that over again, to see if he could find real happiness in it being sadly disappointed in that of pleasure. He indeed commends wisdom, and prefers it to folly, and a wise man to a fool; and yet observes some things which lessen its value; and shows there is no happiness in it, the same events befalling a wise man and a fool; both alike forgotten, and die in like manner. And then he takes into consideration business of life, and a laborious industry to obtain wealth; and this he condemns as grievous, hateful, and vexations, because, after all a man's acquisitions, he knows not to whom he shall leave them, whether to a wise man or a fool. And because a man himself has no rest all his days, nothing but sorrow and grief. After making the experiments, he found that there is no solid and substantial happiness in it, as it was by himself. So he concludes by saying all is vanity.\(^{73}\)

\(^{73}\) Eccl 2:1-23
The Book II of H.W. Sten's *Ka Burom Ba La Jah*, reveals the survey and the progress of the preparation for the battle against the new land. They entered into the eight territories above. Wherever they went, except in Jylla Ummihding, they received promised for support to fight for 'the battle that the eyes never seen before'.

In this poem, Sten depict the pleasures that are offered in the vanitys fair –

Khlem jain khlem nep ki dih umsngur umstem
Ki tah ka doh, dohkha, ki pha, ki jhur
Lyngngeh ranngei ka khlieh ka noh shyntur
(Completely nude, they drank drinks of many colours,
Fating meat, fish, potatoes and vegetables
Losing balance their head bowed down.....)

He shows more of the items present in Vanity Fair in Lines 523-529

Ym don ka nia bashai ba lah peiphang
Iano ki shkor kin sngap ha lew thala?
Ka ja ka doh ki bam, doh ngab, doh nieh,
Doh met ki kjup ki mad. Kham thiang kham shngiam
Kano, kin tip shuh hi haba umsngur,
Umstem, Umiong ki dih? Ka sur lynnihar
Kata ka mih, dei sur kynthei, sur rwai
Sur shad ruh don, sur kob, sur phon
(To whom they will give their ears in such vanity Fairs
They partake of rice and meat, cheek flesh*, skin flesh
Body flesh they taste. Which is more tasty. They cannot say when clear water, yellow water, black water they drank? Loud sounds
Coming out in female voice, the sound of singing, sound of dance; sound of fight and sound of enticement).

All those things that we see in the vanity fair are those warned in the Bible76.

The poems also speaks about the human sacrifice in the Fair. Sten writes –

"Wan ring hangne lai ngut ki thei sotti
Ban knia ban roi ki ksuid ki khrei lawei"
(Bring here three virgin girls to sacrifice for the future prosperity of demons!"

Furthermore, Sten portrays the climax of sinful acts of fornication and sexual immorality in the vanity Fair when he writes

Haba baroh la bam, la dih, la doh
La dait la tan la ban ha khmat paitbah?

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76 Isa 41:29;Ps 10:7; 12:2; Eccl. 1:2,14

*The word ‘doh’ in Khasi is ambiguous. It may refer to flesh or meat and also to a kiss
(A place where everybody ate, drank, kissed, bit, pulled and pressed shamelessly and openly in front of everyone?)

In the Vanity Fair, all forms of enticing merchandise were advertised for sale. We can find pleasures such as drink, drugs, lusts, of all sorts, murder, witchcraft, gambling, theft, and all kind of wickedness—the lust of the eyes, the lust of flesh and the pride of life. According to the Bible, the above item in the Vanity Fair are called the works of flesh and are vanities.77

S.S. Majaw in his "Ka Shnong Jingthala" (City of Vanity) reflects the sinful condition of that particular city. All those things that we see in the City of Vanity are evil and shameful. Verse 1 and 5 displays the aspirations and action of people belonging to that city.

Hangta da riew sangrang dohnud;
Jingshai ka hok la kah.
Bunsien ki peit da mat kynriang,
Ban tah mationg kim khein;
Wat ban kawang d'u maw ka ktieh,
Dohnud la kum mawlein.

[Men with cruel heart where the

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77 Gal 5:19; 1John 2:16; Rom 7:5
78 S.S. Majaw, Ha Ki Sur ka Poetry, 1984, Shillong p37
light of honesty is totally darkened. Such people always looked suspiciously around, looking for ways to hurt others without a care. They had no compunction to throw stones and mud at other people for their heart is as hard as stones.

The poet’s depiction of the city, is reminiscences of what the Bible speaks about the vanity of vanities

*Behold, they are all evil; their works are nothing; their images are wind and vanity*. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under his tongue are mischief and vanity. They speak vanity each one with his neighbour; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

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79 Isa 41:29  
80 Ps 10:7; 12:2  
81 Eccl. 1:2,14