CHAPTER III
CHRISTIAN VIRTUES AS REFLECTED IN THE SELECTED POEMS.

3.1.1. This chapter analyses selected poems which projected Christian ideals and virtues. Christian ideals are those of which serve as standards found in the Bible. These includes Themes such as a transformed life, love, hope, humility, grace, prayer, true worship, diligence, self denial, friendship, redeeming the time, life's meaning etc. The themes above, which are emphasized by the selected poets in their poems.

3.1.2. THE TRANSFORMED LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

The New Testament of the Bible places special importance on the need for repentance before one can lead a transformed life. This means a change from an old way, a life that is of the flesh and of the world and where God does not have a part. According to the Bible, regeneration or new life means a radically new beginning rather than a mere restoration of previous conditions. This renewal involves a change in the person.

The initial experience of regeneration is followed by a continuing renewal in the life of the Christian. Like newborn babies, new Christians are to desire the pure milk of the Word of God in order to grow spiritually. Apostle Paul commands
an ongoing transformation of a person by the renewing of the mind. The new person remains in a process of constant renewal and the inner self is renewed daily.\textsuperscript{82}

The present result of the new birth is a new person or new creation for which old things are replaced by new ones. It is this new creation rather than superficial participation in religious practices which is the goal of Christian life. It involves laying aside of the old nature and putting on a new nature. In the final analysis, however, this is never the result of human effort alone for human beings are God’s workmanship.\textsuperscript{83}

Three of the selected poets, namely H. Myliemngap\textsuperscript{84}, J. Diengdoh\textsuperscript{85} and Coralton Wolflang\textsuperscript{86} emphasizes the importance of conversion and the need for a new life in a Christian.

H. Myliemngap’s poem “Kut Jingmut Triang” (To be firmly determined) speaks about victory starts from the instant a change takes place in a man’s heart. He uses a biblical term “new life”, which refers to a state where something anew is implanted in the soul, something which was not there before. This act is not an improvement of the old nature, but an implantation of a new one by God’s grace and holiness. This transformation brings about a new heart

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{82} 1 Pet; 2:2 Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23; Col2:10; 2 Cor 4:16
  \item \textsuperscript{83} 2 Cor 5:17, Gal 6:15; Eph 4:22, 24; 2:10
  \item \textsuperscript{84} H. Myliemngap, Na Pneh U Lum Shyllong, 1977, Shillong
  \item \textsuperscript{85} J. Diengdoh, Ka Mieng pympong mynsienm, 1978, Shillong
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Coralton Wolflang, Ki Sur Phaiang Jingmut, 1990, Shillong
\end{itemize}
and a new spirit, and with them a new light and life, new affections and desires, new delights and joys.

Myliemngap in particular reflects on the importance of determination and commitment on the part of man to hold on to his new life. He writes as follows:-

Ba ngin ioh im pat Jingim thymmmai,
Tang kut jingmut triang, jingjop kan wanphai
(To achieve the goal of living a new life only strong determination will ensure victory.)

Because of his corrupt and sinful nature, man can not enter heaven without being 'born again' by the power of the Holy Spirit. The very purpose of Christ's coming to this world is to seek and to save that which was lost and to save sinners from their sin. The Bible teaches that only those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ will be saved and be transformed into a new creation.

Myliemngap in this poem talks about a life that is changed due to a person's decision and determination to renounce sin. Man has to do his part and then only can new and holy desires spring up like a well of living waters. As a result, the new birth produces a life which overcome the flesh and the world.

---

87 John 3:3
88 Luke 9:10
89 John 3:16
90 John 4:14
91 1 John 5:4,
Coralton Wolflang in the poem ‘Sawdong Ka Ri’ (Around the land) from his book Ki Sur Phalang Jingmut calls upon the whole Khasi nation to repent of its wrong doing and to run to God for mercy. He compares the people to the prodigal son of the parable narrated in the Bible. The poet reminds the nation of the difficulties and humiliation that the prodigal son had to face because he had turned away from his father. He warns them of similar dangers that may await them when they turn their back on their Heavenly Father. He writes:

“Kum khun sarong awria ba thngan
Ba kynmaw iing I Pa
Na Pap shyrkhei to ngin kynran,
Ale ngin phai kylla”

(Like the starving prodigal son who remembered his father's house, let us repent from such a terrible sin and let us turn back to Him).

Like the prodigal son who had to know himself, the people of Khasi land also need to understand the spiritual danger they are in. Like him, they need to repent and turn to God to live a life worthy of the Creator’s gift of salvation. When the people repent and turn to God, joy and happiness will cover the land.

92 Luk 15: 11-24
93 Luke 15:17
94 2 Chro 7:14
In another poem entitled ‘U Riew Blei’ (The Godly Man) Coralton Wolflang shows how the power of the gospel can bring about a radical change in the life of the one who accepts it. Even the worst robbers with were converted and transformed because of the godly man’s word. He therefore led them to a new and transformed life.

“Te ki lok nonglute,
Hadien ki kylla
I‘u Blei ki mane,
Ki kmen ki sngewbha”
(Robbers who are also dear friends to me turned away from their sin and later worshipped God with joy)

The very purpose of Christ’s coming to this world is to seek and to save that which was lost and to save sinners from their sins and to give them a new and joyful life.

As a result of a transformed life, the old things in a person’s life have passed away; together with them, his old way of living, of serving God and also his yearning for wealth, fame, and other worldly pleasure. There is a new course of life, that runs in his life full of faith and peace because of his new way of serving God through Jesus Christ God’s son.

95 Luke 9:10
3.1.2. LOVE

Love represents a range of emotions and experiences related to the senses of affection and sexual attraction. The word love can refer to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from generic pleasure to intense interpersonal attraction. Christian love is not mere a feeling but it is about life itself. The Bible narrates how a Pharisaic lawyer once asked Jesus Christ, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”. Christ replied to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind’. This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is alike, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets.

In the Gospel according to Saint Mathew, the very essence of the Law given through the prophets is firstly to love God and then to love other fellow humans. Christian love is giving to others those things that you would want them to give if you were in their place - and to do so even if they cannot pay you back. Christian love shows respect to others. It is full of mercy. The old term for it in the Bible is charity.

The Bible declares that “God is love”. Never was a more important declaration made than this in the Christian faith and; never more meaning crowded into a few words than in

---

96 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/love
97 Mat 22:36-40
98 1John 4:8, 16
this short expression for a Christian. It is indeed a profound statement and is the basis of all God’s redemptive acts for creation. God does not just love, He is love. His nature and essence are love. Love permeates His very being and infuses all his other attributes even His wrath and anger.

Since it is God’s essential nature to love, He demonstrates His love through the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross for sinners who are in rebellion against Him. God’s love is not a sentimental, romantic feeling. Rather, it is agape love, the love of self-sacrifice.

Christ died for unworthy creatures who were “dead in trespasses and sins”99. He did it not because human beings deserve it, but because of His abundant love and mercy, so that “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”.

It is not enough for a believer to possess knowledge, faith, and to understand all mysteries if he does not have love. Spiritual love is the supreme kind of love. It is said that knowledge can make one arrogant, but that love edifies. Love is indeed a bond of perfection.

A prominent Khasi poet, S.S. Majaw in his poem “Ka Jingieit” (Love) discusses love as it is expressed by Apostle

---

99 Eph 2:1; Rom 5:8
Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians\textsuperscript{100}. The poet chooses to pinpoint only two aspects of the Apostle's discourse on love. He writes

*La nga kren da ki thylliej ki bricw
Bad ki Angel.
Haba ngam don ka jingieit,
Nga la jia long
Kum ka wiang rong kaba sawa,
Ne kum ka shakuriaw ba riew shaw shaw,
(Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, when I have no love I became like a sounding brass or like a clanging cymbals that just makes meaningless noise).

This verse is reminiscent but not identical to the first verse of the Thirteenth Chapter of the Epistle which warns about empty words for words without love have no value. The excellent way of love is not what is meant by charity in common use of the word which is almsgiving, but love in its fullest meaning which is true to God and to man. Without this, the most glorious gifts are of no account, of no esteem in the sight of God. A clear head and a deep understanding are of no value without a benevolent and charitable heart.

La nga don ruh ka jingneit baroh
Kat ban pynkynriah noh ia ki lum,
Haba Ngam don ia ka jingieit

\textsuperscript{100} 1Cor 13: 1-8
Ngam long ei ei ruh em.
(And though I have a great faith which is enough to move mountains, yet when I have no love I am nothing)

Faith without love will result in futility and emptiness for it does not enrich one’s personal spiritual experience and growth. Even doing good to others will be meaningless to a person if it is with the spirit of love. If one is to give away all that one possesses, the act will not profit him in any way at all if he holds back love. Finally, the poet writes:

To iabeh phi sha kane ka jingieit”
(Therefore you must strive to attain this love)

The closing line of the poem exhorts Christians to strive for love in order to live a fulfilled life. Like Apostle Paul, Majaw concludes by exhorting the reader to run toward this goal which is the right kind of love. This, to him, is the greatest of all human virtues. This particular portion of the Bible talks about the importance of faith, hope and love. Faith fixes on the Divine revelation, and assents thereto, relying on the Divine Redeemer. Hope makes a Christian look forward to future happiness and to carefully wait for that. In the end, however, faith and hope will no longer be necessary. But love, perfect love, will continue to eternity. In heaven man shall perfectly love God, and all the redeemed of God shall perfectly love one another.

101 1 Cor 13:13.
Another poet who has chosen to project this theme in his poem E. Weston. Dkhar. In his poem ‘Hapoh Dulan’ (Inside the Mansion), the poet touches on this fundamental Christian teaching, namely, the depth of God’s love for man.

Mano ba sngewthuh ia jingjylliew Blei?
Jingieit ba kytang H’u briew u thch sei
(Who can understand the depth of God? It is only through His sacred love that He poured on man)

God’s love is described as “the center of Christianity, the Christian fundamental motif par excellence” The estimate is supported by the entire Bible especially by the teaching of Jesus Christ the Apostles Paul and John.

In spite of the commonality in personal usage which makes possible a general definition, the specific meaning and expression of love will vary, depending its context. The depth of God’s love for man will differ in some respects from man’s love for God or for his fellow man. God is said to love people not because of who or what they are but simply because he loves them. The supreme expression of His love is seen in the way He continues to love in spite of people’s rejection of him. In such instance, God’s love is graciously unrelated to the merit of its objects.

102 Anders Niggren, Agape and Eros, Philadelphia, Westminster. 1953, p48
103 Deut 7:7-8
God's love is most fully revealed in the cross of Christ\textsuperscript{104}. God's concern for mankind is fully expressed in the sacrificial giving of his son for the redemption of sin.

3.1.3. HUMILITY.

The term "humility" is derived from the Latin word "humilis", which is translated not only as humble but also alternatively as "low", or "from the earth"\textsuperscript{105}. Humility is the defining characteristic of an unpretentious and modest person, someone who does not think that he or she is better or more important than others. It is one of the most essential quality of a Christian.

Humility as a virtue is a major theme in both the Old and the New Testament of the Bible. It is necessary to the service of God\textsuperscript{106} and Christ exemplifies this virtue as a model for the saints\textsuperscript{107}. Jesus Christ teaches, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"\textsuperscript{108}. The Bible further says that "before honour is humility"\textsuperscript{109} and "by humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life\textsuperscript{110}

Jerome Diengdoh in his poem 'Sngewrit Nga Phla' (Humbly I Confess), expresses the hope of eternal life which he can obtain through a humble repentance before God.

\textsuperscript{104} John 3:16-17; 15:13; Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10
\textsuperscript{105} Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
\textsuperscript{106} Mic 6:8
\textsuperscript{107} Math 11:29 John 13:14, 15 Phil 2:5-8Ps 34:2
\textsuperscript{108} Luk 14:11
\textsuperscript{109} Pro 15:33; 18:12
\textsuperscript{110} Pro 22:4
Humility and penitence are Christian principles for finding reconciliation with God. It allows one to respond properly to conviction of sins. It implies sad and humble realization of and regret for one's sin and misdeeds. Repentance, on the other hand, adds the implication of a resolve to change accompanied by a complete change of character. It stresses the sorrowful regret that constitutes true repentance. In Christian faith, crying and weeping for forgiveness of sins is the way to receive mercy and salvation from God.

3.1.4. HOPE.

Hope is a belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life. Hope implies a certain amount of despair and believing that a better or positive outcome is possible even when there is some evidence to the contrary.\textsuperscript{111}

To hope is to expect the fulfillment of a desire or wish. As human beings every one needs hope to help deal with pain in the present and for deliverance from fear about the future. Worldwide poverty, hunger, disease, destruction, and everyday suffering create a longing for something better. The

\textsuperscript{111} Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
The Bible says that those who do not have God do not have hope. The modern world has often placed its hope in human efforts, believing that with time, things would get better. The wars of the twentieth-century have negated that optimism, and many have given up hope of a better future. Others continue to trust that leaders will find solutions to the problems that they have created. But human history raises the question of whether this trust is well placed.

In "Meingi Ba Kthang" (Bitter Sunrise) B.L. Swer reflects on a young man's hope even though the conditions he faces have become very difficult for him to bear. From the human point of view it seems that things are going from bad to worse. He writes:

Hynrei balei ngam jaw ummat;  
Ioh ka kylla long tang ka synei ladc, ka  
Jingpynjot syndon thiaw ia ka salit jingkyrmen  
Ba don hapoh dohnud ba dang rhem jong nga!  
(But why shouldn't I weep  
Less it become self pity, which  
Totally destroy the little hope  
That fans the flame in my heart)

The poet expresses the hope that good things can be turned out for the best. But he is not sure whether it will
come to pass. He says that he has just “a little” hope. Crisis offers both danger and hope. To B.L. Swer it is hope, which is one of the gift of God, that will remain after all things are gone.

The Bible states that “and now faith, hope, charity, these three remain”\textsuperscript{113}

The poet spells out the crucial importance of the witness of truth and amid the web of lies and deceit in which men are caught. He calls the reader's attention to the power of the powerless as they join together and risk their lives in confronting the problems surrounding them. The Bible encourages Christians to hold on to a hope that is everlasting, a hope that will never be disappointed:

Through him we also have access by faith into his grace in which we stand, and we rejoice on the hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we glory in afflictions also, knowing that afflictions work out patience, and patience work out experience, and experience work out hope. And hope does not make us ashamed, because the love of God has, been poured out in our hearts the Holy Spirit given to us\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{113} 1 Cor 13:13
\textsuperscript{114} Rom 5:2-5.
3.1.5. GRACE

It is mercy when we don't expect it or deserve it. The Bible tells how God has extended grace to man by offering us salvation-eternal life with him-for free! Man doesn't have to do anything to earn it. In fact, one can't earn it or buy it. He simply accepts it by believing that Jesus, God's Son, died for our sins so we wouldn't have to. God's ultimate act of grace is an example of how man has to extend grace to others. He should be quick to forgive, hasty in extending kindness, generous in love—even when others don't deserve it.

In his Ka Jingai-ei Bneng (Heavenly Grace), G.P. Wahlang brings a translation of a famous Christian Hymn, 'Amazing Grace', which has an origin in the Classic Hymns of John Newton composed by the American Melody and arranged by Edwin O.Excel3.

3.1.6. PRAYER

Prayer is an act of humble worship in which man seeks God with his heart. It often begins with a confession of sin116. Prayer is an expression of an intimate relationship with God the heavenly Father, who makes his own love and resources available to those that seek him. One prays to God for guidance and helps.

3Website, http://www.hymnal.net
116 Online source; Illumina, Gold & Benny Hinn Edition
Throughout the Bible effective prayer includes elements of worship, confession, and commitment, as well as requests. Jesus Christ taught his disciples that prayer shows an intimate relationship with the Father that includes one's dependency on Him for daily needs, a commitment to obedience, and belief in the forgiveness of sin. Prayer is to be consistent and persistent. It can be spontaneous.

Prayer is an opportunity to bring a person's will in line with God's plan. It is the means through which one can demonstrate one's trust in God. Prayer is a Christian's privilege to approach boldly before God.

Biblical prayers are wide-ranging but at times specific. As King Solomon in the Book of 2 Chronicle 6:1-42 led the people in prayer, he asked God to hear their prayers concerning a variety of problems: (1) crime (2) enemy attacks (3) drought (4) famine (5) the influx of foreigners (6) war (7) sin.

In his poem “Jingim ba la leit” (Past life), Jesaiah Tham shows that the best way to gain peace and happiness is by praying to God. He writes in the following lines.

“Tang kawei, tang kawei jingphylla nga shem,
Ban pan map, ban duwai ia u Blei nga dem
Dei hangta nga sngewsuk jai ka mynsiem”

118 2 Cho 6:1-42
Only one wonderful thing I have found and
that is to repent and bow down in prayer before God.
That is the only way for me to have peace in my heart.

After trying to find pleasure in the things of the world,
the poet finally found that true happiness came to his heart
only after he repented of his sins and bowed down before God
in prayer and humility.
Prayer of repentance stresses the sorrowful regret that
constitutes true repentance. Such prayer expresses of a true
sense of one's own guilt and sinfulness; and an expectation of
God's mercy.

In his poem "Jyrsich" (Miry Clay), Coral Wolflang cries
out in prayer for God's help. He understands his helpfulness
to overcome temptations. A Christian is commanded to pray
unceasingly\textsuperscript{119}. Prayer is conversation with God; the
intercourse of the soul with God, not in contemplation or
meditation, but in direct address to him. It is "praying and
crying to heaven"; "seeking unto God and making
supplication"\textsuperscript{120}. Thus the poet makes his supplication to God
in the following lines –

"Ah Blei to da na bneng
Ban lait na ka jingriam"

\textsuperscript{119} Phil 4:6
\textsuperscript{120} 2Chro 32:20; Job 8:5
(Oh God please give me your heavenly protection so that I will not fall into temptation)

The poet expresses the need for divine protection because temptations that occur and recur throughout his life are much too strong for him. He knows that only God can strengthen and protect him from giving in to these temptations. Therefore, he takes recourse to prayer crying out for God’s protection.

3.1.7. WORSHIP

Worship is due to God on account of his attributes and of being the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Saviour of His creation. Both the Old and the New Testament of the Bible place great emphasis on the importance of worship for all Christians.

According to the Bible the true worshipers of God worship Him in spirit and in truth. That means that in opposition to all carnal conceptions of God is not a corporeal being or an image created by human hands. In Christian faith God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient but He is also spirit. Believers must also worship God in truth. In opposition to hypocrisy they must worship Him with a singleness or purpose with sincerity, and integrity in their spirit.
Worship in the Bible is the due response of rational creatures to the self-revelation of their Creator. Worship is an act of honoring and glorifying God and acknowledging his greatness and graciousness, towards His creation. It involves praising him for what he is, thanking him for what he has done, giving him glory and thanksgiving for His mercy, judgment, and power.

Human beings are created to worship and the Bible teaches that God alone is worthy of man's praise and worship.

The poet Firmly Star Lyngdoh in his poem "U Diengsning" (A Sycamore Tree), feels inspired to offer a song of praise to God when he looks at the sycamore tree. He writes:

Nga ruh ban long kum me nga kwah,
Ngan rwai iaroh l'u Blei ba lah;
Wat ha ki sngi ka jingshitom,
Nuksa jongme ngan bud rukom
(Like you! want to sing praises to God. Even during the days of affliction and suffering I will continue to follow your example of praising God).
The poet in this poem expresses the Biblical teaching of offering true worship which should come from the heart. It should not be something that it carnal.

As mentioned above, one of the characteristics of the sycamore tree is its fruitfulness. The poet has the desire to be fruitful in his life like a sycamore tree for it is the desire of God that his children should be fruitful. Christian is expected to produce spiritual fruits through which and with in his life. The fruit of such type will be without defect and of heavenly wisdom.

An important characteristic of the sycamore tree is the service it renders to man. It bears all hardships, moisture nor heat. Without spoiled or destroyed by them. That is why Egyptian mummy coffins, are made of it and these are found to be perfectly sound even after an entombment of thousands of years. It was commonly used for making doors, and large items of furniture. So great was the value of these trees, that King David in the Bible appointed special overseers to supervise the procurement of sycamore tree in his kingdom as he did for the olives. It is also mentioned that one of the worst of Egypt's calamities was the destruction of her sycamores by hailstones.

---

121 Math 3:8; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 9:10; Phil 4:17; Col 1:10
122 Ps 92:13,14; Ezek 47:12; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; Jas 3:17
123 1Chro 27:28
124 Ps 77:47
The poet perceives this unique nature of the sycamore tree as truly serving God and truly worshipping Him. It is a tree that bears the harsh battering of nature without being affected by it. The poet wants to emulate the character of the sycamore tree by offering true worship to God through times of joy and happiness as well as during times of sufferings and sadness. These external experiences should not stand in the way of true worship.

In his poem “Ka Îngmane Hapoh Ri Khlaw” (The Church In Wilderness) G.P. Wahlang speaks about true Christian worship which is not in form but rather in the spirit of man.

“Jingmane Blei ba shisha long,
Mynsiem ba ai ym ka rongphong”
(True worship is
In spirit and not mere ritualistic)

According to the Bible the worshipers of the true God, shall worship Him in spirit; in opposition to all carnal conceptions of him, as if he was a corporeal being, or circumscribed in some certain place, dwelling in temples made with hands, or was to be worship of the Jews, which lay greatly in the observation of carnal ordinances: and this shows they should not worship with their bodies only. They must also worship God in truth; in opposition of hypocrisy, with true hearts, in the singleness, sincerity, and integrity of

---

125 Eccl 12:13
126 John 4:23-24
their souls; and in distinction from Jewish ceremonies, which were only shadows, and had not the truth and substance of things in them; and according to the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; and in Christ, who is the truth, the true tabernacle, in, and through whom accent is had to God, prayer is made to him, and through whom accent is had to God, prayer is made to him, and every part of religious worship with acceptance.

Worship is due to God on account of his nature and perfections, both internal and external; with both the bodies and souls of men; and both private, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances: it must be in the true and spiritual manner before described, which is suitable to his nature, and agreeably to his will.

The title of E.W. Dkhar's poem *Tang Jingainguh Thang* (Only Burnt Offering), talks about the importance offering burnt offering in thankfulness to God. Burnt offering refers to a sacrifice offered to God by letting it be consumed by fire, so that it ascends to God while being thus consumed. Part of every offering was burnt in the sacred fire, but this was wholly burnt, a “whole burnt offering”. It was the most frequent form of sacrifice in the Old Testament of the Bible. Such sacrifices were offered by Abel, Noah, Abraham and by the Hebrews in Egypt127. The law of Moses afterwards prescribed the occasions and the manner in which burnt sacrifices were to be offered. There were “the continual burnt

127 Gen 4:3,4; Gen 8:20; Gen 22:2,7,8,13; Ex 10:25
offering”, “the burnt offering of every Sabbath” “the burnt offering of every month”, the offerings during the Passovers, at Pentecost and other offerings occasions. Burnt offerings are sacrifices which express the worshipper's devotedness to God.

In his “Ka Lamphang” (Introduction). Weston Dkhar explains the reason why he was inspired to write his poems. The trials and difficulties he experience in his life's journey brought to him the sense of worship and a thankful heart to God for what His faithfulness through those times.

When he listens to the sounds of nature, the heart of the poet is filled with awe and wonder over the handiworks of God. The poet offers his own burnt offering to God through his songs of worship when he sings-

“Tang da jingrwai nga ainguh ia me Trai
Me long ka kpait ka thymmei ka tynrai;
la ka kyrte ng ba ha khlieh tam jong me;”
(With my song , I offer thanksgiving to You Lord for You are the beginning, the source and origin of all creation.
I offer them to you, God Almighty)

Singing songs is usually considered a part of public worship for Christian. Next to prayer singing praise to God, is part of any meeting. Of course songs of worship may be offered by a person singly and on his own or by a few
believers in the way Paul and Silas sang a loud praises to God loudly in the prison\textsuperscript{128}

The 'name' of God is 'I am', that is himself and He is to be praised by all his creatures, especially his saints. Through their worship, men acknowledge Him as the father of mercies, the giver of all good gifts. They also acknowledge that they are unworthy of these, and therefore all glory belongs to him. Jesus Christ, as man not only prayed, but gave thanks to his Father while he worked on earth\textsuperscript{129}

3.1.8. DILIGENCE

Diligence is a zealous and disciplined nature that one undertakes and completes one's tasks. Planning how one utilizes one's time and completing them properly is a sure guard against laziness. This means putting forth full concentration and effort in undertaking one's work. Diligence is a constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken is a persistent exertion of body or mind\textsuperscript{130}.

The poet Coralton Wolflang is inspired by the Biblical teaching on the unique nature of ants in showing diligence. In his poem "Ki Dkhiew Kiba Stad" (The Wise Ants), appreciates this important Christian virtue. The small creatures refer to the family (Formicidae) of colonial hymenopterous insects and are stated to have a complex

\textsuperscript{128} Ps 69:30; Jas 5:13; Acts 16:25

\textsuperscript{129} Math 11:25, 26 John 11:41

\textsuperscript{130} Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary
social organisation with various castes performing special
duties. In exhorting this virtue, the poet writes –

"Nga shong ban bishar, la ki nga peit kai
Ki dkhiew kiba rit ki ai jinghikai"
(I sat down and watched these small creatures,
the ants and I learned a very valuable lesson)

The Bible considers it worthwhile to learn such a lesson
from the ants. The lessons one can learn from such small
creature are unity and diligence, attributes which are
considered important in the Bible. Unity is the state of
being united or joined together as a whole. It is a harmonious
relationship among people or groups. It is an important
quality when a group fails opposing factions. It is a state of
forming a complete and a pleasing whole, more so among
those who are a part of the Body of Christ.

Another poet, E. Weston Dkhar, in his poem "Shaphrang
Shaphrang Khynnah" (Move Forward Children) also touches
on this theme. He encourages young people to be diligent
particularly in their search for wisdom and fame. He reminds
them that youth is the time to learn and to build up a strong
foundation for their future. It is the time to mould and shape
their character. If they understand this, their future will be a

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2002, Deluxe Edition CD WINDOWS VERSION
131 Pro 6:6, 30:25
132 Eph 4:3
133 The Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English 2008, Oxford University Press
bright and secure one. In the following lines, the poet encourages youths to strive for what is good with all their might –

*Haba phi trei jingtrei,
La buit la bor to sei
(Whatever work you find you should do, do it with all your might)

The lines above speak of the right spirit, the right mind to undertake that which is good by working cheerfully and diligently.

This is in accordance with the teaching of the Bible where, if man has done his duty with diligence and to the best of his ability, he will receive a good reward\textsuperscript{135}.

**3.1.9. DENIAL OF THE SELF**

Self-denial means the denying of the self, not one’s own self, but for the greater good of others. This is the meaning of really denying of oneself. It is a sacrifice of self-interest of vested motives and it glorifies God. Self-denial implies giving up that which is considered beneficial and good to oneself. It further implies the joyful way of giving up what one needs of what might contribute to one’s comfort for the purpose of doing good to others.

\textsuperscript{135} Eccl 9:10; Pro 22:29
The supreme example of self-denial is the Cross of Jesus Christ. Traditionally in Jewish Custom, to be hanged on the cross would be the most grievous and cruel punishment in their society. Jesus Christ hanged on the Cross to take away the sins of the world. The Son of God came for this purpose to redeem fallen sinful mankind. Thus, to be a follower of Christ, a person must deny himself daily, and be a blessing to others.

In his poem "Khristan ka Nam" (So called Christian), Weston Dkhar explains that the presence of God in their life is the mark of those true Christians.

I’u briew ka pop ki da sahnar,  
Jingim thymmai ka la synshar"  
(The sinful nature of man is crucified and thus a new life rules over him)

To be crucified with Christ, does not meant to hang on a cross literally. When a person gives up a sinful life and turn to God his "old man", which means his old carnal nature was crucified. That is the only way that man can lead a new life, free from the bondage of sin and of the flesh.

3.1.12. MEANING AND PURPOSE IN LIFE

The study of the doctrine of man has also been called Anthropology. This word comes from two Greek words;
"Anthropos" meaning "man" and "logos" meaning "discourse". One of the chief areas of concern is the inevitable questions of the origin of man. Mankind wants to know where he came from and where he is going. Three theories concerning man's origin will be treated briefly here.

The Atheistic Evolutionist holds the theory of spontaneous generation that all forms of animal life evolved from more primitive forms of life. The evolutionary theory holds roughly that cell matter evolved into life forms, and then to fish, birds, animals, apes and finally man. It remains a theory, not a proven fact, because the 'missing links' in the transitional stages have never been found.

Theistic Evolution holds that higher forms of life evolved from lower forms, but that the lower forms were created by God. This is partly the truth in that God is acknowledged as the creator of part of creation. However, it is also partly false in that the Bible teaches the creation of the species, not their evolution. All fish, birds, animals and man were created in their order to reproduce "after their kind" not to evolve to some higher form. A reptile can only produce a reptile, a horse can only produce a horse, and a monkey can only produce a monkey, never a man.

Theistic Creation holds to the Scriptural fact that God is the life source, the originator and maintainer of all forms of life, and the one who created all to reproduce "after their
kind”. The final creative act of God was man, the highest creation of God on this earth.\footnote{Gen 1:26-31}

The original man was the direct result of a creative act of God. Man is a divinely created being, the crowning glory and masterpiece of God’s creation. Man in his original state, was but of the earth, earthly; a mutable creature, and altogether vanity; so that it was wonderful that God should magnify him as he did, raise him to such honour and dignity, as to set him over all the works of hid hands, and bestow peculiar marks of his favour upon him.

There are a number of parameters, defined and analyzed by scientists in recent years, indicating the fact that life has formed at all in this universe, is not an accident. It is, rather, by purpose, pointing out that life as we know it is the result of a careful design, rather than a haphazard formation, of the universe. This “design” requires a Designer to have fine-tuned every detail of the universe.\footnote{http://www.tedmomtgomery.com}

Christian believes that life is received from God.\footnote{Gen 2:7 1Sam 2:6 Job 27:3 Ps 104:30 Act 17:25; 1Chro 29:15 Jas 4:14} But because of its brevity and transient nature, life is compared to a shadow, to hurrying messengers, to a weaver’s web and to a vanishing vapour.\footnote{Gen 1:26-31} The purpose of Christian life is to invest one’s life in the service of God. It is also aims in doing the Father’s will and finishing the divine task that has been set.
Then completing the course joyfully till he has attained Christ likeness 140.

Moreover life is also compared to a light. Here we find a new title given to the disciples of Jesus Christ 141, as descriptive of their public testimony – "the light of the world". The light is clearly that which defuses itself. Afterwards Jesus said: "I am the light of the world:" 142 thus reminding Christian that their light is not their own, but a reflection of his glory 143. What the luminaries, the sun and moon, are in the heavens, with respects to the corporal light, that the disciples were in the world with regard to spiritual light; carrying and spreading the light of the Gospel to all over the world, which was in great darkness of ignorance. The business of the Church, is not only to save, but to enlighten. Christian is light, and his disciples must be light.

Many Khasi poets have expressed their view on the meaning of life according to Christian teaching. In his poem "Jingim U Briew" (Life Of Man), Firmly Star Lyngdoh compares man’s life to that of a flickering light when he writes –

Jingim u briew ha ka pyrthei
Ka long kum Sharak rit
(Man’s life in this world is like a little lamp).

140 Josh 24:15; John 4:34; John 17:4; Acts 20:24; Phil 3:13-14
141 Matthew 5:14
142 John 8:12
143 2 Cor 3:18
As light dispels darkness and enables a man to see his way, so a Christian by example and action helps remove ignorance and prejudice and point other to the right way of life. This is the purpose of life for a Christian – to be the light even if it is only a flickering light in a very dark world.

In his poem “Uei une u briew” (Who is man), H.O Mawrie alludes the title of the poem from the Bible\(^\text{144}\). The Psalmist in beholding the glory of the heavens, asked the question, “What is man ...?” Man is a created being. He owns his existence to God, the creator and sustainer of all things\(^\text{145}\). The fact that man owes his existence to a creator makes him a dependent creature. He is not self-existent and thus cannot be independent whether he realizes that fact or not. He is dependent on God for his very breath. It is in God that the Bible says “we live, and move and have our being”\(^\text{146}\).

Man is an intelligent being. He is endowed with reason, intelligence, imagination, and the ability to express his thoughts in language. He is a superior being in comparison to others in the animal creation who are simply creatures of habit and instinct\(^\text{147}\).

\(^\text{144}\) (Psa. 8:4 with Job 7:17-18; Psa. 144:3; Heb 2:6).
\(^\text{145}\) Gen.1:26-28; 2:7; Job 33:4; Rev.4:11; Psa. 139:14-16; 104:30; 1 Cor 11:9; Isa.45:12
\(^\text{146}\) Acts 17:23-31
\(^\text{147}\) Gen 2:15; 1:26-28; 2:19-20; Isa.1:18; Math 16:7; Gen 11:6; 8:21; Job 35:11 Rom 1:21
The poet in this poem highlights this biblical fact when he talks about the authority and dominion of man over all creatures in this world:

"Na ki jingthaw ha ka pyrthei,
Ia u la buh kyrpang
Bu’n long kynrad halor kiwei
Bu’n synshar ia ki lang"

(Man is created specially among all the creatures in the world to rule and to be the master over all of them)

In the above lines, Mawrie brings a biblical thought that man was created with dominating power over all the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air; and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creep upon the earth that is, to catch them, and eat them. Man can have dominion over the tame creatures, either for food, or clothing, or carriage, or for all of them, some of them for one thing, and some for another; and over all the wild beasts of the earth.

In his poem "Uei u briew" (Who is man), another poet, E.Weston Dkhar speaks of man as the masterpiece of creation. Man was created in the image and likeness of God as a tripartite being, consisting of spirit, soul and body. God created man to have a relationship with Him, to be made into His image and likeness, to share in His function of dominion

---

148 Gen 1:26
149 Gen 1:28
and to be fruitful and reproduce Himself. Though the entrance of sin seemed to frustrate God’s purpose for man in creation, this purpose is accomplished through God’s work of redemption.

Considering the wonderful creation of man the poet could not but express in astonishment.

H’u Briew ba paw shynna, ka jinglong Blei.  
Bla mang, b;la thaw, da ka matti? Jong U  
Napdeng jingthaw baroh ki jingkyrkhu  
H’u briew kham khraw, kham palat ia kiwei.”
(The Divine trait is clearly reflected in man. He is predestined and created by God’s own hands. Among all creatures, man enjoys God’s choicest blessings far greater than those enjoyed by other creatures.)

This clearly expresses the doctrine of creation according to the Bible where man was “made a little lower than God”\(^\text{150}\), “a crown of the entire creative process”\(^\text{151}\) and declared “very good” by God himself. He was entrusted with possession of the earth, he was instructed to rule over other earthly creatures and he was commanded to subdue earth and its resources for his use. In short, by contrast with the rest of earth’s creation, man was made to be godlike\(^\text{152}\). The Bible\(^\text{153}\) express the most familiar creation of the physical part of man.

\(^{150}\) Heb 2:7  
\(^{151}\) Gen 1:26; 2:3  
\(^{152}\) Gen 1:31; Gen 1:26; Ps8; Gen 1:26-30  
\(^{153}\) Psalms 139:14
In his poem “Ko Tiewkulap” (Oh Rose), the poet, Coralton Wolflang gives a figurative allusion to the transitory, temporal nature of human life. The significance of the rose is its beautiful colour and sweet odour and for giving delight to its beholders. The Rose is the symbol of excellence, of loveliness, and of beauty. It is always exposed to dangers, enemies, and so it needs proper protection. The rose grows and thrives under the warming and refreshing beams of the sun. After appreciating the beauty and fragrance of a rose, the poet writes –

Ko Tiewkulab ngi ruh kumjuh  
Tang katno ngi la tlor’  
Na pyrthei bak nging phet jynduh  
Ynda la poi ka por

(Oh Rose we in like manner, we will also wither within a short time when the times comes, we will depart from this world forever.  
Away from this world we’ll go  
When that time would come

Looking at the temporal nature of human life, the Bible compares the life of man to that of a withering grass and of a flower\(^\text{154}\). Man is compared to a flower because of the colour, the fragrance and temporality of existence. The rose delights not in fat soils and rich clays, but in rubbish, and roses that grow there are of the sweetest smell; and such was the earth

\(^{154}\) Ps 103:15
for. Being watered with the dews of grace, like rose, man
flourishes and becomes fruitful but then withers\textsuperscript{155} away after
a short span of time.

\textsuperscript{155} Ps 90:5-6