

A PROVERB

Then shall the Kingdom of Satan be likened to a grain of tobacco seed, which, though exceedingly small, being cast into the earth grew and spread and became a great plant, so that huge and vile worms made their habitation thereon.

And it came to pass that in the course of time the sons of men beheld it and thought it beautiful to look upon and much to be desired to make lads look manly. So they put forth their hands and did chew of the weed, and some it made ill and some to vomit most filthily.

Yet they returned to their chewing and it grew on them so that they became weak and unmanly and said, "We are enslaved and cannot cease from chewing it." And the mouths of all that were enslaved became foul and were seized with violent spitting, and they did even spit in ladies' parlors and in the House of the Lord. And the Saints of the Most High God were greatly plagued thereby.

And in the course of time it also came to pass that others snuffed it and were taken with violent nasal spasms and did sneeze with mighty sneezings, insomuch that their eyes were filled with tears and they did look exceedingly silly. And yet others cunningly devised the leaves into rolls and did set fire to one end thereof and suck vehemently at the other end thereof, and did look very grave and calf-like and the smoke of their defilement ascended up forever and ever.

And the cultivation of the plant became great and mighty business in the earth, and the merchantmen waxed rich by the commerce thereof. And it came to pass that even the ministers of grace defiled themselves therewith, and the poor who could not buy bread or books for their little ones, spent their money for it.

And the Lord was greatly displeased therewith, and said, "Wherefore this waste? Why do these little ones lack bread and shoes and books? Turn now your fields into corn and wheat and put this evil thing from you and be temperate and defile not yourself any more, and I will bless you and cause My face to shine upon you."

But they all exclaimed with one accord:

"We cannot cease from chewing and snuffing and smoking. We are slaves to the weed."