48 THE APOCALYPSE [cu. ii. 15, 16  
  
The seductions of Balaam were two: “ the eating of  
things offered to idols, and the committing fornication.”  
Against their sins, so closely allied in heathen worship,  
the Holy Spirit by Paul raised a loud testimony.  
1 Cor. vi., viii., x. But the corrupt leanings of nature  
prove too hard for the witness, and the terrors of the  
Most High.  
  
15. ‘‘So hast Thou also, those that hold fast the doctrine of  
Nicolaitans in like manner.”’  
  
In the epistle to Ephesus, the ‘“‘ deeds’’ of the Nico-  
laitans were condemned. In this, their ‘‘ doctrine.”  
Evil deeds never reach their height, never dare stalk  
abroad unabashed, till evil practice is sustained by evil  
theory.  
Satan was now trying them, by the same device which  
he had contrived in the desert. Nicolaitan doctrine  
had sprung up within the Church. Those deceived by  
it were, many of them, believers in Jesus. Over such  
only had the angel of the Church power. For such  
only was he responsible. 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. They were  
members of the Church of Christ, not mere pretenders.  
For the Saviour, throughout the Epistles to the churches,  
exposes false pretensions. He twice discovers the Jews  
who falsely so called themselves ; He exposes the pre-  
tended prophetess of Thyatira, Laodicea’s vain boast of  
riches, and the angel of Sardis’ name of life, with sad  
reality of deadness.  
Under the churches, there is the lure to eat “ things  
sacrificed to idols ;”’ in the prophetic days, compulsion  
to naked idolatry. The great False Christ is a Cesar.  
Rev. xvii. 9, 11. How appropriately then is the city  
that first introduced into Asia the worship of the Cesars  
made to show the germ of the last outbreak of sin !  
  
16. “‘ Repent therefore ; or else I am coming to thee quickly,  
and will war against them with.the sword of my mouth.”