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 Nicolaitans 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 pretended 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 Coesar*.  
Rev. xvii. 9, 11. How appropriately then is the city  
that first introduced into Asia the worship of the Caesars  
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.”