440 THE APOCALYPSE [cH. xvii. 8  
  
There are two senses given to the Wild Beast, (1) a  
general, (2) a special one. (1) In the general sense,  
the Wild Beast means the Roman empire. (2) In the  
special, it signifies a particular emperor of Rome, wield-  
ing all the power of the empire. It is to the Wild  
Beast in the special sense that the angel’s explanations  
apply.  
He “was.” He once existed as a man on earth.  
He died, and as dead is found no longer on the earth.  
His threefold titles are in designed comparison with  
the threefold title of God. ‘“‘He who was, and is,  
and is to come.”  
“ And is not.”  
This gives his relation to the present, or the time at  
which the angel was speaking. It is the natural con-  
sequence of the former word—‘‘ He was.” His day is  
over: he is no more found among men.  
“ Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take  
Benjamin away ” (Gen. xlii. 36-38).  
“He is about to ascend out of the bottomless pit.”  
These words instruct us where he is now to be found. He  
is a disembodied spirit, and as he was a wicked man  
on earth, he is among the damned souls in Hades, in  
the part specially assigned to the lost. But he, unlike  
the rest of men, is about to appear on earth once more.  
“ He is about to ascend out of the abyss ’—or the great  
central cave of the earth. His ascent brings him again  
to earth. This shows us that a person, nol an empire,  
is here spoken of. He returns to Rome, where he  
dwelt of old.  
“And to go into perdition.” He does not, as the  
consequence of his escape from the place of the dead,  
live for ever. That is true of the saints, but not of  
him. Nor is he cast again into the pit which he left.  
Having been anew clothed with a body, he is cast into  
the eternal “lake of fire.” xix. 20; xx. 10. Thus he