OH. xiv. 4] EXPOUNDED 365  
  
us, there is added—‘‘ For they are virgins.” This  
excludes the chastity of the married.  
The word “women ”’ does not mean something evil.  
"Tis women literally taken ; not the One Emblematic  
Woman of chapter xvii. That is a mystery, and it is  
explained : these are literally taken, and not explained.  
Nay, the description we are considering is given in the  
explanation.  
(2) The excellence supposed is too wide to be the  
reason of the place given to this special body. What !  
Are none but these 144,000 guiltless of idolatry ?  
Have not countless thousands, both of Jews and Gentiles,  
been free from idolatry ? Is it not stated as the reason  
for the descent of God’s plagues on the earth, that the  
inhabitants repented not of their idolatrous worship ?  
ix. 20. But there the accusation is given in literal  
words. ‘‘ They repented not of the works of their hands,  
that they should not worship devils, and ¢dols of gold.”  
Must not all the saved be free from idolatry ? “‘ Idola-  
ters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which  
burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second  
death ” (xxi. 8; xxii. 15).  
. Why, then, should not the description be taken  
literally ?  
1. We assume as our first principle that the literal  
is the true meaning of any text, if, when it is so taken,  
it yields a good sense. Here it fits admirably, both  
with the Apocalypse and with other portions of Scrip-  
ture, as we shall see.  
2. The four sentences which follow upon ver. 3,  
give us the explanation of the vision which John saw.  
He first describes the special body he beheld, and then  
tells us the grounds on which they attained to their  
post of glory. The words, therefore, are to be taken  
hiterally. Three explanatory statements are given con-  
cerning them, each beginning with, ‘“‘ These are they.”