

UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL.

BY REV. G. E. ELLIS.

THERE are three different methods by which, especially in these inquisitive times, the authority and the purpose of the gospel are investigated; viz., the historical, the philosophical, and the experimental method. It is well to claim and to allow for each of these methods a lawful range of inquiry, and a proper satisfaction in its results, when it is fairly pursued. The gospel must be historically true, and philosophically true, and experimentally true: no believer of it will hesitate to assert and to vindicate all that. So far as the gospel, in its records, is committed to dates in history, to written documents from the inspired pens of those contemporary with its origin, and to monuments of its annals in the lands over which its light first dawned, it must have credentials of no doubtful warrant. So far as the contents of the gospel are justly subject to the questionings of the highest philosophy of life and of truth, they must be proved to be in harmony with God's other oracles; for this is but affirming that the light which shines upon the surface of the earth is of the same essence with the light of which the sun in heaven is composed. And so far as the experience of eighteen centuries will admit of interpretation as having offered confirmation or illustration of the gospel, experience must be shown to attest that an influence from above the earth has been working benignly upon it. It is more important for us to remind ourselves, that either one of these methods for testing the gospel will be perfectly satisfactory in its results. And it is a grateful fact