

by Canon Barnes

A WOMAN MODERNIST.

DEATH OF MISS DOUGALL.

"E. W. B." writes:—The unexpected death of Miss Lily Dougall, announced in *The Times*, will be mourned by many friends and is a serious loss to liberal theology. She had reached the age of 50, and had written a number of novels before she produced any theological work. It was not until some fifteen years ago that her religious interests began to find literary expression; then some half-dozen volumes followed the book, "Pro Christo et Ecclesia," with which her name was for some time associated. These volumes found an appreciative public because in them shrewdness, religious earnestness, and no little knowledge were happily blended. She lacked the discipline necessary to make a trained theologian; but she had read widely and combined independent judgment with a *flair* for good scholarship.

She best deserves to be remembered, however, for the skill and sympathy with which she gathered in her house at Cumnor, near Oxford, groups of men and women interested in religious problems. These gatherings had a quality peculiar to themselves, because of Miss Dougall's personal charm and religious insight. Frail in physique and a little hesitant in speech, she was none the less the unifying centre of her various conferences. They were stimulating and strenuous, because conversation, argument, illustration, and repartee went on unceasingly. The gravest issues were discussed with sincerity and frankness; and the hostess was ever ready to prevent over-seriousness or *ennui* by flashes of subacid fun. These Cumnor gatherings were the source of three important books, "Concerning Prayer," "Immortality," and "The Spirit." Each has already taken rank among the best collections of theological essays of recent years. They are written from the standpoint of liberal orthodoxy and are singularly free from polemical bitterness. To each scholars of weight contributed; and not infrequently the reader comes upon passages of great religious depth and beauty. Two of Miss Dougall's closest associates in religious writing have already passed away prematurely. A. W. Turner was killed in the war; and Cyril Emmet, whose development was of exceptional worth and promise, died while on a visit to New York three months ago.

In spite of bodily weakness, Miss Dougall had great energy, mental and physical. Her sense of humour fortified her spiritual serenity. It prevented her from worrying over hostile criticism, and gave piquancy to her own comments on sophistry and humbug. With her Modernist sympathies there went a simple, almost childlike faith. Perhaps for this reason she had a great love of children. As she herself said:—Religion can never fully lose touch with the simple things of

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