

# An appreciation of D.N. Dunlop

*by*

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The origin of this journal was Mr. D.N. Dunlops idea, and the title "The Present Age" was his choice. He wanted me to create this journal and he hoped to write the introductory article. The day before his last illness started, he intended to meet me and a friend of mine, in order to make the preliminary arrangements, but he did not come at the time he arranged, and when I went to see why he did not come I found him already ill. The last thoughts which he communicated to me before he passed away on Ascension Day, 1935, were dedicated to this journal, and it became an absolute duty for me to overcome every difficulty in creating it. So this will explain why we start this journal by bringing him into remembrance.

Daniel Nicol Dunlop was born in the Christmas season, on the 28th December, 1868, in Kilmarnock, in Ayrshire. His father was an architect and a Quaker, and in this connection he did some work in religious education. Mr. Dunlops mother died when she was twenty-six, and the little boy was only five. The mother was born in Arran. Mr. Dunlop told me that his only memory of her was a little cave on the beach that was shown to him where he was told that his mother had often sat deep in thought, looking at the waves. He often came to sit in this cave and gaze on the sea and think about his mother whom he so much missed. The great Mother Nature, with the blue mantle in the daytime, and the starry mantle in the night, was ever with him.

One day his father told him that he should read the Bible, beginning with the creation of the world, and finishing up with the Apocalypse, chapter by chapter, day by day. He said that he did not want to do it, but after he had done it he enjoyed it. "And I am doing it still," he said. He read as much as five chapters daily. When he was nine years old, he had twelve boy friends who used to come from considerable distances to see him on Sundays. Then, standing up on a rock, he would read to them a chapter of the Bible, and explain it to them. He said to me, in referring to it: "I have no idea what I told them, but on looking back I know that I grew enthusiastic and then my voice took on the tones of song." He told me all these details and many others in the Summer School at Westonbirt, Monday, 27th August, 1934, when I asked him to tell me the story of his life.

He said: "It is not that I have forgotten now what I said in my preaching, but immediately after I had given this oration, I was so excited that I could not remember what I had said. I remember that I had great difficulty in explaining to these other children the beginning of

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St. Johns Gospel, because I had to explain to them how the Word could become Flesh, and so I remember that I said, 'Christ cannot be compared with other human beings, because we cannot say of any others that they are the crystallized Word. So Christ must have been different from all others in this direction.'"

Mr. Dunlops father was an architect working on the mainland, and so the little boy lived with his mothers father at Aran. He had to do all the housework for the grandfather. He used to fish, and cook what he caught, and he learnt to make and mend the nets. He and the grandfather were the only human beings in the neighborhood, so the life was very lonely, and it was mostly on Sundays that he saw other children. One day when he was about ten or eleven years old, it was raining and very stormy and his clothes were very wet, and as evening drew on the storm increased. He and his grandfather were in the little house with no other human being at hand. As he lay in his little bed a great feeling of eeriness crept over him, so he asked his grandfather to allow him to come into his bed. There, in the arms of his grandfather he fell asleep. But that night the old man died, and when the boy awakened he found himself lying in a pool of blood. He was shocked but not frightened. He stood up and stirred the fire, dried his wet clothes in front of it and sat on a little bench in the window looking out to sea. He had fried a herring and began to eat it, and after this little meal he began to think.

He said to me: "I was fully conscious that my grandfather was dead and that I was alone, but I had no feeling of hurry. So I started thinking and my thoughts turned to dreams, and from dreams to visions. I could see myself riding upon a camel and others joined us, and I saw my grandfather, but with another face, on horseback. He was wearing rich white clothes."

I asked Mr. Dunlop if he were clothed like an Arabian and he said "No, much richer, maybe Egypt." Then pictures came and changed like a kaleidoscope. He told me one more. He saw himself as a young officer looking up to a much older and very fine looking man, riding beside him through the desert. Then he saw himself as a Grecian youth, leaning against a pillar in white garments and with a golden girdle. He was watching a procession which entered the temple. It was one of the Secret Groves, dedicated to the Cult of the Orphic Mysteries and he felt great sorrow because the woman whom he loved was being taken away from him for initiation in the temple. He felt completely desolate.

He said to me: "I did not then know about Reincarnation. I just had the experience of my previous lives, but I had no theory about such things. Later, when I was eighteen years old, I met in Ireland my beloved friend, George Russell, and he was the first human being to whom I could speak about such things. In this way through him I became conscious of Reincarnation."

George Russell was known as a poet and philosophical writer, under the pseudonym of "A.E." I was deeply impressed when I read that shortly after the passing away of Mr. Dunlop, his friend followed him. The Times of the 18th July, 1935, gave an appreciation of George Russell.

Let us return to the little boy sitting by the window and gazing out to sea. After he had finished his dreaming he went away from the house to the other end of the island, where there was a shop and a post-office. He asked the shop-keeper to send a message to his father on the mainland to tell him of his grandfathers death. At first the man would not believe him but as he insisted he consented to send the message. The father came and they buried the old man.

Mr. Dunlop told me: "There was no minister, there were no mourners, no undertakers, no public, only my father, myself and our little horse which drew the carriage. We did it all by ourselves."

He was about seventeen when he went to the mainland and his father found for him a post in an office in which he worked for very little money. One day an agent from a publishing company appeared, and had an advertisement with him of a "History of the World" appearing in installments. Each installment cost half-a-crown.

Mr. Dunlop said: "Can you imagine what I felt by hearing the words 'History of the World.' How wonderful it must be to know all about the history of the whole world, I felt very deeply that I had to have it. But I had no money, so I told the agent that I was very, very sorry that I could not buy it, but the agent said 'Here you have a little cash, take it. You can pay it back later.'" So he did. And each fortnight he took the necessary two-and-sixpence from the cash box, replacing it by an I.O.U. until he was owing his employer ten shillings. Then seeing no way of repaying the 'debt,' he informed his employer what he had done. But his employer would not excuse such a thing and so he lost his job and his father refused absolutely to give him the money. Now the boy was on the street without money and a debt of ten shillings. His father never wanted to see him again, so he went down to the harbor and as a ship was in port and loading its cargo he was allowed to stitch up the sacks of merchandise and earned thirty shillings. In the meanwhile he heard that his father had changed his mind and had paid the ten shillings for "The History of the World." So he paid the ten shillings to his father. His father would not believe that he had earned this money in an honest way, but after a long talk and when he made the whole story clear to him he believed his son and agreed to him having the whole "History of the World." The next day the boy returned to the harbor and earned a pound and decided to go out into the world to seek his fortune. He put fourteen advertisements in newspapers and got fourteen answers offering fourteen positions. He prayed to God for guidance and decided to go and

see all the people who had answered him. He went according to the alphabetical order of their names. Coming to "H" he found his position, but he left it after a few days and went to a Frenchman whose name was Fontaine. There he had to start work at 6 o'clock in the morning. He earned twelve shillings a week and had to pay three for his room. He found a room in a very poor house in East Glasgow, but it was clean and cheap, both essentials. In reality this room belonged to the seafaring son of the woman who had let it to him, and from time to time the son returned and he had to share the room with him. He told me. "I had two candles which I watched very carefully and by their light I read my books. I never could buy a book dearer than two pence, or occasionally three pence." So after a time he had a library of one, two and three penny books and the "History of the World." The house was not very comfortable and at the weekend everybody was drunk. But Mr. Fontaine was pleased with his work and after a few weeks gave him three pounds a week.

This was as far as Mr. Dunlop got with his story. We had to break off the conversation and I was only able to ask him a few other things at intervals. And so the rest of this story will be very incomplete. But it may be that this journal will come into the hands of friends of Mr. Dunlop who know more and are able to complete my information, and I should be very grateful for more knowledge.

I will now mention some details which he gave me. In speaking about A.E., George Russell, his Irish friend, he said: "We created together a magazine, 'The Irish Theosophist,' and we printed it and even learned to do the illustrations. We had in our bedrooms the printing press, and by taking up colored work we greatly increased our sales. A.E. had never written a poem before, but for this journal he made his first attempt.

Mr. Dunlop joined the Greek Church as a member about the year 1920. He wished – in this connection – to travel in Russia, and he really started, but unforeseen circumstances intervened and he got no further than Norway. He had already been in contact with the Theosophical Movement. For two years he was the private secretary of Catherine Tingley in California, and he met W. Q. Judge. He arranged a number of summer schools for the Theosophical Society and started at Hale (Cheshire) a Blavatsky Institute which was visited by Mrs. Besant. He told me some details of his time in America. After difficulties in his position in Point Loma, he was very poor and was without occupation. He was already married and had two children. His wife was Eleanor Ossory Fitzpatrick. He told me that one Christmas day he had no money at all, no money for presents to the children, who were then six and eight years old. The third was not yet born. He was specially grieved because on Christmas eve he had not even a meal for them. But just an hour before they should have sat down to their evening meal a stranger appeared, having with him a great Christmas hamper. Everything was there, gifts for the children, the usual turkey, fruit, bread and wine.

He said, "It must be a mistake. We have no friends and nobody knows us." But the man who brought it said, "No. You are Daniel Nicol Dunlop. And this is your Christmas hamper." Mr. Dunlop said, telling me this: "It always gave me courage, even many years later, when I thought of this event."

He also told me about Mr. Thomas Lake Harris, whom he met first in Ireland. He said: "Harris once met Laurence Oliphant in Piccadilly. Harris touched him on the shoulder and said 'I want to change your life. Try to become the correspondent of The Times in Paris. Go to Paris, but one day a stone will be thrown through your window. Understand this as the sign that you must go immediately to California.' All this happened. Oliphant found an excellent successor for his work for The Times and left, Paris." All this Mr. Dunlop told me himself. Mr. Lake Harris was the head of a Spiritual Community, the Brotherhood of a New Life. In connection with this community there was a vegetarian restaurant in Dublin, where a special non-alcoholic wine was sold. Mr. Dunlop and his wife ran this restaurant for six months, but it came to an end when the cook had to leave. In this way Mr. Dunlop had a connection with Harris. After his return from America he had in his possession all the books by Harris, but up to that time he had not read them.

He felt that he should write to Madame Blavatsky, and he told her that he was in possession of all Harris's unpublished manuscripts, but had not started to read them. H. P. Blavatsky answered that he should send all these books back without reading them and after an important decision in which he had to choose between Harris and Blavatsky he decided in a way which was illustrated in a vision. Mr. Dunlop told the content of this vision to me, but I found a description of it written down by George Russell, his friend, under the title, "The Secret of Power" in the journal "The Path" which appeared as a publication of the Blavatsky Institute in Hale, Cheshire, and was edited by Dunlop and Lazenby. Mr. Dunlop told me that this vision appeared not only to him but also to his friend, George Russell, who was present in the same house in the moment of the vision. A.E. (George Russell) writes in Volume I of "The Path," February, 1911: —

"My friend was strangely disturbed, not only were his material affairs unsettled, but he was also passing through a crisis in his spiritual life. Two paths were open before him. On one side lay the dazzling mystery of passion; on the other 'the small old path' held out its secret and spiritual allurements. I had hoped that he would choose the latter, and as I was keenly interested in his decision, I invested the struggle going on in his mind with something of universal significance, seeing in it a symbol of the strife between 'light and darkness which are the worlds eternal ways.' He came in late one evening. I saw at once by the dim light that there was something strange in his manner. I spoke to him in enquiry; he answered me in a harsh dry voice, quite foreign to his usual manner: 'Oh, I am not going to trouble

myself any more. I will let things take their course.' This seemed the one idea in his mind, the one thing he understood clearly was, that things were to take their own course; he failed to grasp the significance of any other idea or its relative importance. He answered: 'Aye, indeed,' with every appearance of interest and eagerness to some 'trivial' remark about the weather, and was quite unconcerned about another and most important matter which should have interested him deeply. I soon saw what had happened; his mind, in which forces so evenly balanced had fought so strenuously, had become, utterly wearied out and could work no longer. A flash of old intuition illuminated at last – it was not wise to strive with such bitterness over life – therefore he said to me in memory of this institution, 'I am going to let things take their course.' A larger tribunal would decide. He had appealed unto Caesar. I sent him up to his room and tried to quiet his fever by magnetization with some success. He fell asleep and as I was rather weary myself I retired soon after.

"This was the vision of the night. It was surely in the room. I was lying on my bed and yet space opened on every side with pale, clear light. A slight wavering figure caught my eye, a figure that swayed to and fro; I was struck with its utter feebleness, yet I understood it was its own will or some quality of its nature which determined that palpitating movement towards the poles between which it swung. What were they? I became silent as night and thought no more. Two figures awful in their power opposed each other; the frail being wavering between them could, by putting out its arms, have touched them both. I alone wavered, for they were silent, resolute and knit in the conflict of will; they stirred not a hand nor a foot; there was only a still quivering now and then as of intense effort, but they made no other movement. Their heads were bent forward slightly, their arms folded, their bodies straight, rigid and inclined slightly backwards from each other like two spokes of a gigantic wheel. What were they, these figures? I knew not and yet gazing upon them, thought which took no words to clothe itself mutely read their meaning. Here were the culminations of the human, towering images of the good and evil men may aspire to. I looked at the face of the evil adept. His bright red-brown eyes burned with a strange radiance of power; I felt an answering emotion of pride, of personal intoxication, of physic richness rise up within me gazing upon him. His face was archetypal; the abstract passion which eluded me in the features of many people, I knew was here declared, exultant, defiant, gigantesque; it seemed to leap like fire, to be free. In this face I was close to the legendary past, to the hopeless worlds where men were martyred by stony Kings, where prayer was hopeless, where pity was none. I traced a resemblance to many of the great destroyers in history whose features have been preserved, Napoleon, Rameses, and a hundred others, named and nameless, the long line of those who were crowned and sceptred in cruelty. His strength was in human weakness. I saw this, for space and the hearts of men were bare before me. Out of space

there flowed to him a stream, half invisible, of red; it nourished that rich radiant energy of passion. It flowed from men as they walked and brooded in loneliness, or as they tossed in sleep. I withdrew my gaze from this face which awoke in me a lurid sense of accompaniment, and turned it on the other.

"An aura, pale soft blue was around this figure through which gleamed an underlight as of universal gold. The vision was already dim and departing, but I caught a glimpse of a face god-like in its calm, terrible in the beauty of a life we know only in dreams, with strength which is the end of the heros toil, which belongs to the many times martyred soul; yet not far away nor in the past was its power, it was the might of life which lives externally. I understood how easy it would have been for this one to have ended the conflict, to have gained a material victory by its power, but this would not have touched on or furthered its spiritual ends. Only its real being had force to attract that real being, which was shrouded in the wavering figure . . . This figure, wavering between the, two moved forward and touched with its hand the Son of Light. All at once the scene and actors vanished, and the eye that saw them was closed. I was alone with darkness and a hurricane of thoughts . . . For the rest the vision of that night was prophetic and the feet of my friend are now set on that way which was the innermost impulse of his soul."

This is the story as given by George Russell. Mr. Dunlop described this vision to me and even many years afterwards, speaking about it, I could see how intensely alive both these figures had been. He described two beings, the red one in red clothing and red light: and the blue one in blue clothes and blue light, both very beautiful and impressive, and the voice sounded and asked him to choose between them, and he said, "I decided for the blue, and it was a great decision, as I felt. The red disappeared at first, and only afterwards the blue, and then an old wise man appeared and began to teach me."

In 1896 Mr. Dunlop joined the American Westinghouse Electrical Company. In 1899 he was appointed assistant manager of the European publicity department of the Westinghouse Company, and moved to London. When I asked him how he first came in contact with electricity, he answered, "I had to write articles. I remember I had to write sixteen articles about the different uses of electricity for The World Exhibition in Paris. One was on the use of electricity in agriculture." These articles were well received and translated into French, thus bringing him into contact with the Westinghouse Electrical Company. I asked him whether he had ever had anything to do with electricity before. He said "No. Only with mechanical engines like bicycles and agricultural machines." So it is interesting that he came into contact with this branch of human activity by writing about it. In 1902 he became manager of the Westinghouse Company. In 1911 he resigned from the British Westinghouse Company and became the first organizing secretary of the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers

Association (B.E.A.M.A.). In 1917 he became Director and held this position up to his death. He was active in founding the Electrical Research Association and the Electrical Development Association. Recently he was elected Chairman of the Electrical Fair Trading Council.

Mr. Dunlop wrote several books about Theosophical problems, and published a journal "The Path." His writings showed that he was an experienced organizer who knew that organization was based on spiritual impulses.

Very interesting was his description to me of his meeting with Rudolf Steiner. Before he personally met Rudolf Steiner he had seen him at one of the Theosophical Societies Convention Meetings about the year 1906. Rudolf Steiners personality immediately made a great impression upon him, but as his books and lectures were not to be had in England then, it was some time before Mr. Dunlop recognized in Rudolf Steiner the teacher for whom he had been looking. Partly because of this he from then on held back from the Theosophical Society, thereby incurring the disapproval of both Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. The opportunity for direct contact with Rudolf Steiner came some time later.

A Dutch trader in wood, Mr. J. van Leer, introduced him to Dr. Steiner. This gentleman had himself a great capacity for organization. He lived in Vienna where I personally knew him and died recently while traveling in Russia. He had a charming personality, able to stand with his two feet on the earth, but at the same time greatly enthusiastic for idealistic and spiritual matters. Mr. Dunlop could only speak English and Dr. Steiner did not speak this language, so Mr. van Leer was the interpreter. He tried to explain in a log talk who Mr. Dunlop was. But it seems that Rudolf Steiner had already made up his mind about his vis-à-vis.

He took his hand under the table and pressed it very warmly. Immediately Mr. Dunlop knew he had at last found the Knower, the Initiate, the great teacher he had sought for, and in that moment began a friendship which, as Rudolf Steiner himself mentioned later, was a reunion between friends who had known each other probably in many previous lives.

He felt that in Rudolf Steiner's presence the soul could breathe freely, could ascend on wings and could have its feet planted on free and independent ground for action. With every meeting with this great man, Mr. Dunlop felt that his first impression was strengthened and deepened.

On the 19th November 1922, Mr. Dunlop asked Rudolf Steiner to take the life presidency of the of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, of which Mr. Dunlop was the Chairman. I have been told that Dr. Steiner answered: "As you are the Chairman, I consent to be the President."

When I asked Mr. Dunlop why he never gave lectures or wrote any more books, he told



me: "In my Theosophical period I gave lectures and wrote books, but since I became a pupil of Rudolf Steiner, I felt very deeply and clearly that I had not to speak and not to write, but to give the proper people the right opportunity to write and to speak. And so I restricted my work to such things as organizing summer schools, producing magazines and speaking as the chairman after someone else has given his knowledge, emphasizing what was important and if necessary balancing the general outlook."

I think that such answer shows the complete lack of conceit in this great man. He had the greatest veneration for Rudolf Steiner, and tried to live entirely in accord with his philosophy.

For this reason he wished me to show the universality of Rudolf Steiner's World conception in this journal.

In 1924 Mr. Dunlop founded the World Power Conference. In reality he wanted to found a World Economic Conference. In this connection he said to me: "I could see clearly that it was impossible to bring together politicians, and as all the important economic decisions are in the hands of politicians, it was hopeless to found an international economic body as a first step. But it was possible to bring together human beings in the field of technical questions, and so I started there. But I always had in mind the idea of enlarging this body of engineers to a body of experts of all branches of industry and agriculture. I wanted not only to include the producers and distributors but also the consumers and consider their point of view."

I asked him: "Do you think that the World Power Conference will agree to such an extension of its objects?"

He said: "I hope so because even in the first publication issued by the World Power Conference it is indicated." And he took in his hand the membership list and operated the first page and showed me the paragraphs under the heading "Objects" of the World Power Conference and I read:—

"The collection of data, the preparation of Inventories of the World's Resources, and the exchange of industrial and scientific information through appointed representatives in the various countries."

He said: "These words were printed in our first publication and in the beginning of 1935 I saw that the time had arrived to take the first step, so I published "World Survey."

Then he took a copy of "World Survey," opened the title page and again his fingers rested on the words:— "Published under the auspices of the World Power Conference for the exchange of economic and technical information and the Provision of a World Economic Service and International Power and Fuel Bibliography."

"You see," he said, "that is not the Journal of the World Power Conference. It is an independent enterprise, but under the auspices of the World Power Conference, and time

will decide if what is intended there will continue under those auspices.”

The first World Power Conference was opened in the Conference Halls of the British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, on 3rd June 1924, by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The second was held in Berlin under the patronage of Reichspräsident von Hindenburg on 15th July 1930. Nearly four thousand members attended the Conference. There were five sectional meetings, in Bale in 1925, in London in 1928, in Barcelona in 1929, in Tokio 1929, in Scandinavia 1933, and a Chemical Engineering Congress will be held in London in 1936. All this shows that Mr. Dunlop was the founder of a large international organization. He was the first human being who proposed after the war to include Germany again in an international body. I asked him about this point and for his reason.

He said: ”If you think along the line of facts, you will find that no international conference on technical subjects would be complete without Germany. So it was just the feeling for reality and the sense of justice which demanded it.”

Mr. Dunlop’s daily life was dedicated to the two organizations, The British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers’ Association (B.E.A.M.A.) and the World Power Conference. But the evenings he used mostly for arranging meetings, lectures, and conferences on cultural or philosophical subjects. Then he would take the chair and certainly no better chairman could be imagined, because his great love encouraged the speakers and his corrections never gave offence, but rather increased this courage by opening up new avenues of thought. Then in his concluding remarks his voice took on again the tones of song and his eternal being, linked up as much with stars as with the earth, seemed to be present.

He had the greatest reverence for human freedom and working under him in his office, working out his economic ideas with him as my immediate superior, I could observe his method. The ideas would originate with him, but he would give them freely to his helpers to be worked out along their own lines. Then he wanted them written down, but he would not read what was written. He would give it to others to read and watched their reactions to it, asking them questions. Finally he would call together, maybe for lunch, people whose views he valued, and wanted to have a living discussion about the matter in question. When I asked him about his method he answered:

”If you want to organize, you have to learn how to use other people’s brains. You must learn to think with their thoughts, receiving at last the full truth arrived at as the balanced result of all possible points of view. Wisdom always arrives at the end. But the right beginning is the desire to help in a certain direction.”