



**G**REATER love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John 15:13-19)

There is one young British officer of the past whom I hold in the highest esteem – Donald Hankey<sup>1</sup> (1884-1916). He was commissioned in the British Army but was not pleased with that position. He resigned his commission and did much missionary work among the poor class living under the same deprivation as his charges. Mr. Hankey began his academic career at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He aspired to become a cleric of the Church of England with emphasis on reaching the same kind of men and women of low degree to which George Whitfield had appealed.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald\\_Hankey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Hankey)

He became a notable writer for the Spectator. Among his popular works are those such as 'THE CROSS,' 'THE LORD OF ALL GOOD LIFE,' 'A STUDY OF THE GREATNESS OF JESUS AND THE WEAKNESS OF HIS CHURCH,' 'THE BELOVED CAPTAIN' (a favorite of mine), 'THE HONOUR OF THE BRIGADE,' and 'A STUDENT IN ARMS.' Most of these are still available and would profit the reader to acquire.

Hankey rejoined the British Army at the outbreak of World War I in 1914, but opted for the enlisted ranks in order to have a greater impact on the spiritual lives of the common soldiers. Later, he was persuaded to accept a commission.

Hankey was a young man of particularly strong religious conviction. Here are some quotes of his from letters from the front (printed below) as addressed to his sister, Hilda. At the beginning of the Battle of the Somme on 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1916, the brigade was ordered to 'go over the top' – vacate the trenches and engage the enemy to the front. Hankey was heard to proclaim to his troops, "If you are wounded, Blighty (home to Britain); if killed, the Resurrection!" Hankey was killed in that battle and was buried on sight. His grave, to this day, is unmarked.

His comments to his sister:

5 December 1914. –

*Almost all men are slaves: they are mastered by foolish ambitions, vile appetites, jealousies, prejudices, the conventions and opinions of other men. These things obsess them, so that they cannot see anything in its right perspective.*

*For most men the world is centered in self, which is misery: to have one's world centered in God is the peace that passeth understanding.*

*This is liberty: to know that God alone matters.*

25 May 1915. –

*In the hour of danger a man is proven: the boaster hides, the egotist trembles, only he whose care is for honour and for others forgets to be afraid.*

*It is blessed to give: blessed is he of whom it is said that he so loved giving that he was glad to give his life.*

*Death is a great teacher: from him men learn what are the things they truly value.*

*Men live for eating and drinking, position and wealth: they die for honour and friendship.*

*True religion is betting one's life that there is a God.*

*In the hour of danger, all good men are believers: they choose the spiritual and reject the material.*

*The death of a hero convinces all of eternal life: they are unable to call it a tragedy.*

1 June 1, 1915. –

*have seen with the eyes of God. I have seen the naked souls of men., stripped of circumstance. Rank and reputation, wealth and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, manners and uncouthness, these I saw not. I saw the naked souls of men in battle. I saw who were slaves and who were free: who were beasts and who were men: who were contemptible and who were honourable. I have seen with the eyes of God. I have seen the vanity of the temporal and the glory of the eternal. I have despised comfort and honoured pain. I have understood the victory of the Cross. O Death, where is thy sting? Nunc dimittis, Domine .*

Donald Hankey, *A Student in Arms*