

## THE STORY BEHIND "I SURRENDER ALL"

*J. W. Van DeVenter*

*All to Jesus I surrender;  
all to him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust him,  
in his presence daily live.  
I surrender all,  
all to thee my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.*

"The song was written while I was conducting a meeting at East Palestine, Ohio, and in the home of George Sebring (founder of Sebring Campmeeting Bible Conference . . .). For some time, I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelistic work. At last the pivotal hour of my life came, and I surrendered all. A new day was ushered into my life. I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my soul a talent hitherto unknown to me. God had hidden a song in my heart, and touching a tender chord, he caused me to sing." Judson Van de Venter

This testimony makes more sense when knowing more about the author's life. Judson Van de Venter (1855-1939) was raised on a farm near Dundee, Michigan. After graduating from Hillsdale College, he taught art in public schools in Sharon, Pennsylvania. Van Deventer was active as a layman in his Methodist Episcopal Church, including participation in revivals held at the church.

Based on his fervent faith and service to the church, friends encouraged him to leave his field of teaching and become an evangelist. It took five years for him to finally "surrender all" and follow the advice of his friends. His ministry took him to various places in the United States, England, and Scotland.

Perhaps the most important influence that Van de Venter had was on the young evangelist Billy Graham. The Rev. Graham cites this hymn as an influence in his early ministry.

<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-i-surrender-all>