

Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL

ASPIRATION AND CONSECRATION
I Surrender All 316

Judson W. Van Deventer, 1855-1939
Winfield S. Weedon, 1847-1908
Arr. by Donald P. Hustad, b. 1918

1. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, All to Him I free - ly give;
2. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, Hum - bly at His feet I bow,
3. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, Make me, Sav - iour, whol - ly Thine;
4. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, Lord, I give my - self to Thee;

I will ev - er love and trust Him, in His pres - ence dai - ly live.
World - ly pleas - ures all for - sak - en, Take me, Je - sus, take me now.
Let me feel the Ho - ly Spir - it, Tru - ly know that Thou art mine.
Fill me with Thy love and pow - er, Let Thy bless - ing fall on me.

REFRAIN

I sur - ren - der all, I sur - ren - der all.
I sur - ren - der all, I sur - ren - der all.

All to Thee, my bless - ed Sav - iour, I sur - ren - der all.

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“I have been crucified with Christ,
and it is no longer I who live, but
Christ lives in me. And the life
which I now live in the flesh I live by
faith in the Son of God, who loved
me and gave Himself up for me.

Galatians 2:20

All to Jesus

WE LIVE IN A SLOPPY, OFTEN INSIPID AGE. This is also an unsubstantial age dominated by an unserious, trivial culture. Just take a moment to contemplate those things that occupy people's attention—perhaps even yours. Trivial indeed. In some instances this preoccupation can inflict great harm; in most instances it is just a ridiculous waste of time.

It is painfully obvious that too much of this culture has infected the church, doing profound harm to faith, doctrine, and theology. But this unserious sloppiness can also hamper our faith-walk in smaller ways—not life-threatening, but nonetheless injurious. For it is always injurious in one manner or another for a believer to misunderstand the truth about God and our relationship to Him.

Some classic songs I hear take me immediately back to my childhood “red radio” days. For one of my birthdays in the 1950s Dad acquired a small, used, AM radio and freshened it up with a coat of bright red paint. That radio became my prized possession. I would lie awake late into the night listening to the Des Moines Top 40 rock-and-roll station (KIOA) with the volume turned way down and my ear pressed to the speaker. Today, when I hear some of those same songs, they are for me “red radio” songs.

Likewise, some songs of the church take me back to Sunday night services in the First Baptist Temple, when the congregation would give full voice to the great old gospel songs. Hearing these songs today I am always transported back to humid summer evenings, with the old stained glass windows flung wide and the cardboard funeral-home fans flapping frantically, but our voices joining heartily to declare strong testimonials about our faith. Many were toe-tappers, but others were more introspective and personal, aspirational, or songs of dedication—even, being Baptists, songs of “invitation.” And one song that combined the last two was “I Surrender All.”

*All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.*

This hymn, written by Judson W. Van DeVenter in 1896, is a wonderful, righteous song that expresses the believer's wish to be earnestly and wholly aligned with Jesus in every way. Yet it is a multi-dimensional hymn—or we might say, multi-perspective—that can be easily misunderstood or, perhaps more often, understood from only one of its perspectives.

To someone not yet a follower of Christ, this hymn might act as an invitation to follow Him, to a repentance of sin, to “give myself to Thee.” In his day evangelist Billy Graham would have called that making a “decision for Christ,” as if one thinks about it a while, weighing the pros and cons, then finally decides to go with the pros. But that's not really how it works. Jesus told His disciples, “You did not choose Me but I chose you” (John 15:16).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, by predestining us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:3–6

We may think our “walking the aisle” was done of our own volition, but, in truth, those footsteps were worked out long before we were even born—indeed, before this world was spoken into existence.

*All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.*

The most skewed perception of this hymn would be for the believer to take these words in a focused, literal sense. For a Christian to declare that he intends to “give myself to Thee” would be a *non sequitur*. Once the confessing sinner has been justified in Christ Jesus; once he has bowed down before the cross, by faith taking Jesus as his Savior, he is henceforth owned lock, stock, and barrel. He has nothing left to “give”—save for his adoration, his praise, his worship—since the Lord Jesus purchased all of him at the cross.

Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

*All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me, Jesus, take me now.*

*All to Jesus I surrender,
Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;
Let me feel the Holy Spirit,
Truly know that Thou art mine.*

No, the best perspective from which to utter this hymn is as a song of *consecration*. Every one of us is daily deluged by people and things wishing to pull us away from our Lord, and even though we acknowledge His lordship over our lives and His utter possession of everything we are and have, we can still be led astray from time to time. We can temporarily lose our focus on Him, because there will always be moments in our life when the flesh wins. While retaining our *positional* devotion, we can forget our *effective* devotion.

Over even the most devout, mature Christian the temporal culture and our own flesh still exert a dispiriting force. When everything around us daily, ferociously works to convince us of our personal sovereignty, it is easy to forget that there is only one true Sovereign in a believer’s life.

While this world works daily to force our submission to it, we must daily re-submit ourselves, *surrender* ourselves, to our true Lord. ♦

*I surrender all,
I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.*

(Judson W. Van DeVenter, 1896)