

## I Surrender All

### ~Other Speakers G-L: Hymn Stories:

**Author --Judson W. Van de Venter, 1855-1939**

**Composer --Winfield S. Weeden, 1847-1908**

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 10:39

This hymn text was written by the author as he recalled the day that he had surrendered his life to Christ and dedicated himself completely to Christian service. It was first published, in 1896, in the collection, Gospel

Songs of Grace and Glory compiled by Weeden, Van de Venter and Leonard. Mr. Van de Venter has left this account of the writing of his hymn text:

The song was written while I was conducting a meeting at East Palestine, Ohio, and in the home of George Sebring (founder of the Sebring Campmeeting-Bible Conference in Sebring, Ohio, and later developer of the town of Sebring, Florida). 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 was born on a farm near Dundee, Michigan, on December 5, 1855. Following graduation from Hillsdale College, he became an art teacher and later a supervisor of art in the public schools of Sharon, Pennsylvania. He was also an active layman in his Methodist Episcopal Church. It was during this time that Van de Venter became especially involved in evangelistic meetings being held in his church. Recognizing his unusual talent for Christian service, his friends began urging him to give up teaching and become an evangelist. For the next five years, Mr. Van de Venter wavered between the challenge of the ministry and that of becoming a recognized artist. Following his decision to surrender his life to Christ, he traveled extensively throughout the United States, England, and Scotland in evangelistic work. He was assisted for many years by his associate and singer, Winfield S. Weeden.

Dr. Billy Graham, foremost evangelist of our century, wrote this tribute to Mr. Van de Venter in the book, Crusade Hymn Stories, edited by Cliff Barrows:

"One of the evangelists who influenced my early preaching was also a hymnist who wrote "I Surrender All---the Rev. J. W. Van de Venter. He was a regular visitor at the Florida Bible Institute (now Trinity Bible College) in the late 1930's. We students loved this kind, deeply spiritual gentleman and often gathered in his winter home at Tampa, Florida, for an evening of fellowship and singing."

The composer of the music for this hymn text, Winfield S. Weeden, was a long-time associate with Mr. Van de Venter in evangelistic work. Weeden was born on March 29, 1847, at Middleport, Ohio. Before his evangelistic ministry, he had been active for a number of years in teaching singing schools throughout his area. He was said to have been an effective song leader and a gifted vocalist. He compiled several collections, including The Peacemaker (1894), Songs of the Peacemaker (1895), and Songs of Sovereign Grace (1897). On his tombstone is inscribed the title of this hymn, "I Surrender All."

Judson W. Van de Venter and Winfield Weeden also collaborated in writing the popular gospel hymn "Sunlight."