



And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:5)

Article X. Of Free Will.

(Thirty Nine Articles Of Religion Of Reformation Church Of England)

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

It is unfortunate hymns of this same devotional quality were excluded from the 1940 Hymnal. To their great credit, the Baptists include them. I am inclined to believe the learned men who compiled the hymns for our Hymnal considered such hymns as the one we expound upon today to be somehow unsophisticated or undignified. I will admit that the poetry is not perfect, and the tune perhaps drags a bit, but this hymn combines music with lyrics so spiritually powerfully that the result is a stellar work of art in hymnology. The hymn speaks to the heart first and not the intellect, and the knowledge and love of Christ must first always be learned through the heart before it is accepted by the intellect. That, perhaps, is the mystery of the Spirit working in common lyrics to draw the pauper, and the king, to Christ. In the end, it is the Spirit of God that moves in us to draw us to the Lord – not our own intellects or spirits (which are evil).

There has long been a heated debate, dividing churches and friends, over the issue of free will versus the providence and predestination of God. I can tell you with complete certainty that if our wills are free to decide what our hearts tell us, we would all be in bondage to the Dark Prince and not of free will at all. The only freedom we can ever enjoy is that which comes from surrendering our old 'presumed' free wills to that of God's Will, and accepting His Lordship in our lives. The will of man that is free does not belong to God.

This hymn comes to us from the pen of Judson W. Van De Venter in 1896. Mr. Van De Venter came to write this poem, according to his own testimony, in the following: *"The song was written while I was conducting a meeting at East Palestine, Ohio, in the home of George Sebring (founder of the Sebring Camp Meeting 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 fulltime 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."* No matter our previous conditions of life, we are suddenly changed the moment we surrender our wicked wills to that of the Lord. The moment that we opt to take up our crosses daily and follow Christ (not our old wills but that of Christ working in our members) then are our wills joined to that of God and not subject to wicked imaginations. The music is composed by Winfield S. Weeden in the same year. The title of the hymn is engraved on Weeden's tombstone, and I pray, in his heart.

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.

Refrain:
I surrender all,
I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blesséd Savior,
I surrender all.

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

Refrain:

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

Refrain:

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

Refrain:

All to Jesus I surrender;
Now I feel the sacred flame.
Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory, to His Name!

Refrain:

“All to Jesus, I surrender; All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.” How casually and sentimentally many sing the lyrics of this song Sunday after Sunday, but without any sense of commitment to living them out in their lives. After all, it is only a song, right? Wrong! A hymn is as close to prayer as one can come without the closet. It is a public affirmation of a private commitment and dedication. If you are holding ANYTHING back, if you are looking over your shoulder toward Sodom or Egypt, if you are hiding the golden wedge where you presume no one will know – you are lying by singing this stanza of the hymn. Surrender is not an act of contrition – it is an act of hopeless submission under overwhelming odds and resources against us. That is the time when the sinner comes to the very end of his rope. There is no place left to go but to fall into the gaping abyss. Without any other hope at all, he may recall that hope his mother taught him of God’s love and redemption under every depravity of life. If he does recall, he will grasp the lifeline and give up all that has forced him to this point – the little sins as well as the great ones. This is total surrender, and it is all that God will accept.

We cannot freely give anything to Jesus, for He owns it all – even our bodies, souls, and spirits. All we can do is acknowledge the fact that we are of no worth, and He is of ALL worth. When we have thus surrendered, His worth becomes our worth, and his righteousness is imputed to us. Love engenders trust. If we respond to His love beams, our love will become so full that our hearts cannot hold that love. It will spill over and overflow as an effusion of waters from the fountain of living waters. (*My Cup runneth over*) All around will become invigorated by its refreshing springs. If we surrender to Him; if we give up self and accept Him; if we respond to His immeasurable love; and if we trust in Him unconditionally – we shall live in His presence daily. Living in His presence entails also bearing the burden of our crosses.

“All to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures all forsaken; Take me, Jesus, take me now.” If we have sincerely surrendered to Jesus all that is in our grasp, if we have humbly bowed at His nail-scarred feet, and if we have forsaken all worldly pleasures out of our love and submission to Him; then we need not worry about the last phrase of this stanza for he has surely already received us into His own.

“All to Jesus, I surrender; Make me, Savior, wholly Thine; Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine.” It is impossible to belong to Christ and not know it. The Comforter is not given at some additional baptism, but granted at the first and is ever present to encourage and strengthen us. Yes, we do suffer moments of doubt when we have slipped by the wayside; but the Holy Ghost whispers softly the quote of our Lord in our hurting soul: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* (John 6:37-39)

“All to Jesus, I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; Fill me with Thy love and power; Let Thy blessing fall on me.” When we surrender all to Christ, we shall, indeed, be filled with His love and power. Lest we forget that it is His love, His power, and His righteousness with which we live, walk, and have our being; we are subject to many trials in life to the glory of God. Even before we came to Christ, we were recipients of His blessings of life and many joys. But once we have surrendered our beleaguered souls, furled our flags of self-righteousness and self-will, and felt the overwhelming immensity of His grace and love, the blessings will fall as the spring rain upon the high desert sands. What was once a barren wilderness of soul will suddenly spring forth with life and colors heretofore unimaginable. I once read of a young street

boy who was drawn to the service in small Midwestern church. The preacher's sermon was particularly moving, and it concerned surrendering all to Christ. When the offering plate was passed around, the young boy reverently received it from the usher and carefully placed it in the floor. He removed his dirty canvas shoes and stepped into the plate. The ushers looked with disdain at this act, but the pastor saw the significance in the act. He came down and embraced the boy. He had not only given his all, but all that he was, to God.

"All to Jesus I surrender; Now I feel the sacred flame. O the joy of full salvation! Glory, glory, to His Name!" There is no lament for blessing or filling with the Holy Spirit in this last verse for the petitioner has arrived at the sure knowledge of the security and assurance the believer always has in Christ. What a perfect peace and comfort, even in the midst of the storm, to know that you are Christ's, and He is yours! The salvation is ALWAYS full for there is no half empty glass of salvation. No longer does SELF loom large in our hearts, but only His glorious Name fills our Mind's Eye with unsurpassable beauty and delight.

Have you ever sung this hymn before, friend? Did you believe the words you sang and, if not, do you now know and believe them with all your heart, holding nothing back?