

# We Must Surrender

By Father Edward Leen C.S.Sp.

Many, in pursuit of the final end of the Christian life, prefer to devote their attention to acquiring perfection of conduct rather than to cultivating the love of God, and find, as the result of their efforts, that they are as far off from one as from the other. To seek to avoid offending God, by watching over our conduct, rather than by inciting ourselves to an affection for Him, Whom we wish not to displease, is an endeavour that meets with scant success. Eagerness to possess moral rectitude and shrinking from the ugliness of moral imperfection is not quite the same thing as actually seeking intimacy with God. Many there are who are more moved by the ideal of their own freedom from moral flaw than by the ideal of loving God with the love of friendship or with the affection of children. In this lies the explanation of the poor quality of the lives of so many Christians. They have not resolutely set before them *God to love with all their hearts, and to love with an ever-increasing love every day, as the object towards which to direct all the energies of their souls.* They have set their eyes on a lower ideal - to work out their existence on earth in a righteous way, but according to their own tastes. They determine not to offend God, but they have no intention of suspending every moment, every act, every thought, every desire, every feeling, every aspiration to His good Will and Pleasure. They do not seek to misuse their lives, they desire only to use them according to their own good will and pleasure. Like the prodigal, they ask the substance of their term of earthly existence from their Heavenly Father in order that they may dispose of it freely. Their intention is not bad; they have the desire to regulate each action by the standard of moral rectitude. They merely do not aspire to have their every act regulated by the dictates of paternal love. They do not desire actually to squander their existence; they merely intend to use it for human and personal ends. Whilst doing all this they have no wish to be estranged from God their Father; on the contrary, they are ever tortured by the fear of His displeasure. They make continual efforts to maintain good relations with Him. They will do anything to succeed in this, short of the one thing necessary, **the surrender of their lives to His controlling love.** □