

Life Everlasting From a conference by Saint Thomas Aquinas, priest

I shall be delighted when your glory is seen

It is fitting that the end of all our desires, namely eternal life coincides with the words at the end of the creed, "Life everlasting. Amen."

The first point about eternal life is that man is united with God. For God himself is the reward and end of all our labors: *I am your protector and your supreme reward*. This union consists in seeing perfectly: *At present we see through a glass, darkly; but then we shall see face to face*.

Next it consists in perfect praise, according to the words of the prophet: *Joy and happiness will be found in it, thanksgiving and words of praise*.

It also consists in the complete satisfaction of desire, for there the blessed will be given more than they wanted or hoped for. The reason is that in this life no one can fulfill his longing, nor can any creature satisfy man's desire. Only God satisfies, he infinitely exceeds all other pleasures. That is why man can rest in nothing but God. As Augustine says: *You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our heart can find no rest until it rests in you*.

Since in their heavenly home the saints will possess God completely, obviously their longing will be satisfied, and their glory will be even greater. That is why the Lord says: *Enter into the joy of your Lord*. Augustine adds: *The fullness of joy will not enter into those who rejoice, but those who rejoice will enter into joy. I shall be satisfied when your glory is seen, and again: He who satisfies your desire with good things*.

Whatever is delightful is there in superabundance. If delights are sought, there is supreme and most perfect delight. It is said of God, the supreme good: *Boundless delights are in your right hand*.

Again, eternal life consists of the joyous community of all the blessed, a community of supreme delight, since everyone will share all that is good with all the blessed. Everyone will love everyone else as himself, and therefore will rejoice in another's good as in his own. So it follows that the happiness and joy of each grows in proportion to the joy of all.

Psalm 17:15; 1 Corinthians 13:12

In justice I will look upon your face, O Lord,
-- and when I awake I will delight in seeing you.

My knowledge now is imperfect;
then it shall be as perfect as God's knowledge of me.
-- And when I awake I will delight in seeing you.