

# Saint Catherine of Genoa

Part 3

1448 - 1510

PURGATORY

The famous *Treatise on Purgatory* of Saint Catherine of Genoa continues:

“7. And because the souls, who are in Purgatory, are without the guilt of sin, thus they do not have any impediment between God and them, except their pain, which has held them back so that their instinct could not reach its perfection. In this way they see with clarity how serious the slightest impediment is, and how their instinct is hindered for the necessity of justice, therefore a blazing fire develops in them, similar to the one of Hell, except for the guilt, which is the one that makes malignant the will of the damned in Hell, to whom God does not respond with His goodness. And thus they remain in that despairing ill will against the will of God.

8. Thus it seems clearly that the perverse will against the will of God is the one that causes guilt and, when the ill will perseveres, the guilt persists. And, since those of Hell passed from this life with ill will, their guilt is not forgiven; neither can it be forgiven; because they cannot change their will anymore; since with that will they passed from this life. In that passage the soul is stabilized in good or in evil, as it finds itself with its deliberate will; since it is written: *Ubi te invenero (Where I find you)*, that is at the hour of death, with which will, either to sin or dissatisfied and repentant of sin, *ibi te iudicabo (there I will judge you)*. For this judgment there is afterwards no remission, since, after death, the liberty

of the free will is no more adaptable, but it remains fixed in the state it is found at the moment of death. Those of Hell, for being found at the moment of death with the will to sin, bear the guilt and the pain with them forever. However, not as much as they deserve, but the one they have is still without end. But those of Purgatory have only the pain, since their guilt was erased at the moment of death, having been found disturbed and repentant of their sins. And thus their pain is finite, and keeps decreasing, as the time passes, as it was said. Oh misery beyond every other misery! And ever more because it is not considered by the human blindness.

9. The pain of the damned is indeed not infinite in quantity, because the sweet goodness of God spreads the ray of His mercy also in Hell. Because the person who died in mortal sin, deserves infinite punishment, and an infinite time for this punishment. But the mercy of God has made infinite only the time of the punishment, and the pain finite in quantity: although justly He could have given him a much greater punishment that He had not given him. Oh how dangerous is the sin committed with malice! Because a person repents of it with difficulty; and without repentance, there always remains the guilt; which perseveres as long as the person remains in the will of the sin committed, or to be committed.”

