

He says that you are justified, holy, saved ...¹

Commenting on Galatians 4:6, this great sixteenth-century preacher of God's grace declared,

Let us thank God, therefore, that we have been delivered from this monster of uncertainty ... The Gospel commands us to look, not at our own good deeds or perfection but at God Himself as He promises, and at Christ Himself, the Mediator. By contrast the pope commands us to look, not at God as He promises, not at Christ our High Priest, but at our own works and merits. From the latter course, doubt and despair necessarily follow; but from the former, certainty and the joy of the Spirit. For I am clinging to God, who cannot lie. He says: "I am giving My own Son into death, so that by His blood He might redeem you from sin and death." Here I cannot have any doubts, unless I want to deny God altogether. And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive. The pope does not know this; therefore he and his furies have the wicked notion that no one, not even those who are righteous and wise, can know whether he is worthy of love. But if they are righteous and wise, they surely know that they are loved by God; otherwise they are not righteous and wise.²

¹ Quoted in Plass *What Luther Says*, pp. 1204, 1205