

“Fire if you dare”

Many years ago, in a Spanish-speaking town in South America, a British subject was arrested for taking part in some local riot. He was condemned to be shot, and he was brought before a firing squad for that purpose.

Without success the British Consul vehemently protested against the act. Then, suddenly, just as the commanding officer was about to give the word “Fire!” the Consul rushed to the side of the condemned, trembling man. As quickly as he could, he wrapped him in the British flag, and then cried out, “Fire if you dare!”

The officer was clearly shaken. The soldiers, in their shock, seemed unable to move and certainly unable to fire. Their arms were grounded and the man was delivered over to British protection.

Like that poor, wretched man, we have been found in breach of the Law – God’s Law, as set forth in the Ten Commandments. “There is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (that is, come short of reflecting his holiness)” (Romans 3:23). We are therefore adjudged “guilty” and, that being so, we are “condemned” to “death.” This is the plain teaching of God’s Word: “guilty before God” (Romans 3:19); “condemned already” (John 3:18); and “sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” – the death which involves our misery here and hereafter (James 1:15).

Our only hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment we believe – or trust – in him, God “imputes” to us, or “reckons as ours”, the Saviour’s “blood and righteousness”, and we are “covered”, “sheltered” and “protected” by “the best robe”, the “garment” of Christ’s “salvation” (Isaiah 61:10).

Only thus can sinners be delivered. How amazing and wonderful are those words – “He that believeth on him is not condemned” (John 3:18); “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).