

Chapter 8

Samuel growing old, and his sonnes for bribes peruerting iudgement, the people require to haue a king. 7. To whom by Gods commandment, Samuel forsheweth the law of a king, to make them cease from their demand; 19. but they perfitt therein.

And it came to passe when Samuel waxed old, he appoynted his sonnes iudges ouer Ifrael. ² And the name of his first begotten sonne was Ioel: and the name of the second Abia, iudges in Berfabee. ³ And his sonnes walked not in his waies: but they declined after auarice, & tooke bribes, and peruerted iudgement. ⁴ ^{a)} Therefore al the ancientes of Ifrael being affembled, came to Samuel into Ramatha. ⁵ And they sayd to him: Behold thou art old, and thy sonnes walke not in thy wayes: appoynt vs a king, that he may iudge vs, as also al nations haue. ⁶ And the word was misliked in the eyes of Samuel, because they had sayd: Geue vs a king, that he may iudge vs. And Samuel prayed to our Lord. ⁷ And our Lord sayd to Samuel: Heare the voice of the people in al thinges which they speake to thee. For they haue not ^{re}iected thee, but me, that I should not reigne ouer them. ⁸ According to al their workes, which they haue done from the day that I brought them out of Ægypt vntil this day: as they haue forsaken me, and serued strange goddes, so doe they also vnto thee. ⁹ Now therefore heare their voice: but yet testifie to them, and foretel them the ^{b)}right of the king, that shall reigne ouer them. ¹⁰ Samuel therefore spake al the wordes of our Lord to the people which had desired a king of him, ¹¹ and sayd: This shall be ^{the} right of the king, that shall reigne ouer you: Your sonnes he wil

^a Heli his sonnes grieuoufly offending in their office before (*chap. 2.*) and now Samuels sonnes also peruerting iudgemēt gaue occasion to the people, to demand a king to iudge their temporal causes rightly not declining to wrong for bribes.

^b *Mifphat* signifieth maner, fasion, or proceding.

take, and put in his chariotes, and wil make them vnto him the horfemen, and running footmen before his chariotes, ¹² and wil appoynt them his tribunes, and centurions, and the plowers of his fieldes, and mowers of his corne, and makers of his armour and of his chariotes. ¹³ Your daughters alfo wil he take to make ointementes, and to be cookes, and bakers. ¹⁴ Your fieldes alfo, and vineyardes, and the beft oliuetes he wil take away, and geue to his feruantes. ¹⁵ Yea and your corne alfo, and the reuenewes of your vineyardes he wil tithe, to geue his eunuches and feruantes. ¹⁶ Your feruantes alfo and handmaidens, and goodlieft yong men, and affes he wil take away, and put in his worke. ¹⁷ Your flockes alfo wil he tithe, you fhall be his feruantes. ¹⁸ And you fhall crie in that day from the face of the king, which you haue chofen you: and our Lord ^a)wil not heare you in that day, becaufe you defired vnto your felues a king. ¹⁹ But the people would not heare the voice of Samuel, but fayd: Not fo: for there fhall be a king ouer vs, ²⁰ and we alfo wil be as al nations: and our king fhall iudge vs, and fhall goe forth before vs, and fhall fight our battels for vs. ²¹ And Samuel heard al the wordes of the people, and fpake them in the eares of our Lord. ²² And our Lord faid to Samuel: Heare their voice, and appoynt a king ouer them. And Samuel fayd to the men of Ifrael: Let euerie man goe into his citie.

ANNOTATIONS

Exod. 19.
Deut. 17.
Iudic. 2. v. 16.

7 Reiected me.) For fo much as God had chofen Ifrael a peculiar people to him felf, and hitherto ruled the fame by his Prieftes eftablifhed among them, and by Iudges extraordinarily raifed vp, and fent by him, to deliuer them in their diftreffes, their demand now to haue a King, who (after the maner of other nations) fhould be their Lord, and haue more dignitie, and authoritie ouer them, then Dukes or Iudges had, is interpreted, as in effect to reiect God: in that they difliked, & fought to change

VWhy the peoples demand to haue a king is difliked.

^a God alwaies heareth thofe that truly repent for their finnes, but doth not alwayes deliuer them from afflictions, which are due for offences, or profitable for probation and merite of his children.

his forme of government. And therefore this request of the people iustly displeaseth both Samuel and God himself.

11 The right of the King.) Samuel here by Gods appointment, to disswade the people from their desire of a king, at least to admonish them before hand, what they are like to find by experience, reciteth such things, as Kings abusing their power do oftentimes practise, by reason of their high dignitie, and little feare of controlment, but vniuertly and vnlawfully; according to the doctrine of ancient Fathers. Amongst others, S. Cyprian calleth the exactions of kings here recited, *greuous iniuries*. S. Hierom *dura imperia, & feruitatem, rigorous or cruel governments, and feruitude*. S. Gregorie proueth the same by two contrarie examples. Seing (sayeth he) that which is here foretold, was punished in Achab and Iefabel (*3. Reg. 21.*) it sheweth, that it was not right by diuine iudgement, which they exacted. And when the elect King Dauid was to build an altar to our Lord (*1. Paral. 21.*) he would not take part of Ornans field, except he payed a iust price for it. Moreouer the law prescribing the dutie of Kings (*Deut. 17. v. 16. Ec.*) commandeth them not to multiplie houses, nor to heape riches nor to take high courage, that their hartes be not lifted vp into pride ouer their brethren. Neuertheles Kings haue great prerogatiues (more then Dukes, and Iudges) besides, and aboue, but neuer contrarie to the law: that albeit they can not take their subiectes landes or goodes, neither for themselves, nor to geue to their seruantes at their pleasure: yet in diuers cases subiectes are bound, to contribute of their priuate goodes, to supplye the necessitie of the King, or of the commonwealth, as by nature euerie part must suffer damage, or danger in defence of the principal member, or whole bodie. And if anie refuse so to do, they may iustly be compelled.

Furthermore in case Kings or other Princes commit excesses, and oppresse their subiectes, yet are they not by and by to be deposed by the people, nor commonwealth, but must be tolerated with patience, peace, and meeknes, til God by his soueraigne authoritie, left in his Church, dispose of them: which his diuine wisdom and goodnes often differeth to do, as here he expressly forewarneth, saying: (*v. 18.*) *You shal crie in that day, from the face of your King, and our Lord will not heare you*. And the reason is, because he wil punish the finnes of the people, by suffering euil princes to reigne. *Iob. 34. v. 30.*

Of which important difficultie, falling sometimes between Princes and their subiectes, who so desireth, may search the iudgement of ancient Fathers, and see S. Thomas, and other chole Doctors, *2. 2. q. 12. a. 2.* Here only for better vnderstanding of this present text, these brief pointes may be obserued. Firft, the people of their owne wil desired to haue a King. Secondly, they requested the same at the handes of Samuel their present Superior. Thirdly, this demand displeaseth both Samuel and God

Kings sometimes oppresse their subiectes by Gods sufferance, but vniuertly.

Kings haue prerogatiues aboue, but not contrarie to the lawes.

Euil princes may be deposed by God & the Church: but not by the people only.

Pointes obserued in the constitution and deposition of King Saul.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

S. Cyp. li. 3. ep. 9. fiue. 65.
S. Hiero. in Osee. 8.
S. Greg. li. 4. c. 2. in 1. Reg. 8.

Concil. Lateran. c. 3. de hæret.

himself. Fourthly, yet God condescended to grant their suite, 4.
but with an admonition, and forewarning of the inconueniences,
which they should finde and feele. Fiftly, God himself designed 5.
the person that should be King, reueled him by vision, and com-
manded Samuel to annoint him. Sixtly, God neuertheles by guid- 6.
ing the lotte, more manifestly declared, and confirmed his election.
Seuently, God depofed the same King, for transgressing his law, 7.
chap. 13. v. 13. and disobeying his commandment, *chap. 15.*
v. 13. appointing an other, by the ministerie of Samuel. *chap. 16.*
Eightly, notwithstanding his depofition, he remained in his dig- 8.
nitie til his death, which happened by other meanes. *chap. 31.*
By al which it appeareth, that God constituted Saul the first King
of the Iewes, the people fuing to haue a King; but depofed him
for euil behaiour, the people desiring no such thing, and Samuel
the Prophet much lamenting the same. Yet was he not actually
bereaued of the crowne and kingdom during his life.