

Chapter 8

Samuel growing old, and his sonnes for bribes peruertering 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 peruertered 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, becaufe 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 [♠]reiected 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 shal 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 shal be [♠]the right of the king, that shal reigne ouer you: Your sonnes he wil

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

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

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. 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

VVhy 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 gouernment. And therfore this requeft of the people iuftly difpleafed both Samuel and God himfelf.

11 The right of the King.) Samuel here by Gods appointment, to difwade the people from their defire of a king, at leaft to admonifh them before hand, what they are like to find by experience, reciteth fuch thinges, as Kinges abufing their powre do oftentimes practife, by reafon of their high dignitie, and litle feare of controlment, but vniuftly and vnlawfully; according to the doctrin of ancient Fathers. Amongft others, S. Cyprian calleth the exactions of kinges here recited, *greuous iniuries*. S. Hierom *dura imperia*, & *feruitutem*, *rigorous or cruel gouernmentes*, and *feruititude*. S. Gregorie proueth the fame by two contrarie examples. Seing (fayeth he) that which is here foretold, was punifhed in Achab and Iefabel (*3. Reg. 21.*) it fheweth, 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 iuft price for it. Moreouer the law prefcribing the dutie of Kinges (*Deut. 17. v. 16. Ec.*) commandeth them not to multiplie horfes, nor to heape riches nor to take high courage, that their hartes be not lifted vp into pride ouer their brethren. Neuertheles Kinges haue great prerogatiues (more then Dukes, and Iudges) befides, and aboue, but neuer contrarie to the law: that albeit they can not take their fubiectes landes or goodes, neither for themfelues, nor to geue to their feruantes at their pleafure: yet in diuers cafes fubiectes are bound, to contribute of their priuate goodes, to fupplie the neceffitie of the King, or of the commonwealth, as by nature euerie part muft fuffer damage, or danger in defence of the principal member, or whole bodie. And if anie refufe fo to do, they may iuftly be compelled.

Furthermore in cafe Kinges or other Princes commit exceffes, and opprefse their fubiectes, yet are they not by and by to be depofed by the people, nor commonwealth, but muft be tolerated with patience, peace, and meeknes, til God by his fouereigne authoritie, left in his Church, difpofe of them: which his diuine wifdom and goodnes often differeth to do, as here he exprefly forewarneth, faying: (*v. 18.*) *You fhall crie in that day, from the face of your King, and our Lord vvill not heare you.* And the reafon is, becaufe he wil punifh the finnes of the people, by fuffering euil princes to reigne. *Iob. 34. v. 30.*

Of which important difficultie, falling fometimes betwen Princes and their fubiectes, who fo defireth, may fearch the iudgement of ancient Fathers, and fee S. Thomas, and other fchole Doctors, *2. 2. q. 12. a. 2.* Here only for better vnderftanding of this prefent text, thefe brief pointes may be obserued. Firft, the people of their owne wil defired to haue a King. Secondly, they requested the fame at the handes of Samuel their prefent Superiour. Thirdly, this demand difpleafed both Samuel and God

Kinges fometimes opprefse their fubiectes by Gods fufferance, but vniuftly.

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

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

Pointes obserued in the conftitution and depofition of King Saul.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

S. Cyp. li. 3. ep. 9. f. 65.
S. Hiero. in Ofee. 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 fuite, 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 tranfgreffing his law, 7.
chap. 13. v. 13. and disobeying his commandment, *chap. 15.*
v. 13. appointing an other, by the minifterie 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 defiring no fuch thing, and Samuel
the Prophet much lamenting the same. Yet was he not actually
bereaued of the crowne and kingdom during his life.