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COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

1 Samuel

by Matthew Henry

To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:

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AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE FIRST BOOK OF

SAMUEL

This book, and that which follows it, bear the name of *Samuel* in the title, not because he was the penman of them (except of so much of them as fell within his own time, to the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book, in which we have an account of his death), but because the first book begins with a large account of him, his birth and childhood, his life and government; and the rest of these two volumes that are denominated from him contains the history of the reigns of *Saul* and *David*, who were both anointed by him. And, because the history of these two kings takes up the greatest part of these books, the Vulgar latin calls them the *First* and *Second Books of the Kings*, and the two that follow the *Third* and *Fourth*, which the titles in our English Bibles take notice of with an *alias*: otherwise called the *First Book of the Kings*, etc. The Septuagint calls them the first and second Book of the *Kingdoms*. It is needless to contend about it, but there is no occasion to vary from the Hebrew verity. These two books contain the history of the last two of the judges, *Eli* and *Samuel*, who were not, as the rest, men of war, but priests (and so much of them is an appendix to the book of Judges), and of the first two of the kings, *Saul* and *David*, and so much of them is an entrance upon the history of the kings. They contain a considerable part of the sacred history, are sometimes referred to in the New Testament, and often in the titles of David's Psalms, which, if placed in their order, would fall in these books. It is uncertain who was the penman of them; it is probable that Samuel wrote the history of his own time, and that, after him, some of the prophets that were with David (Nathan as likely as any) continued it. This first book gives us a full account of Eli's fall and Samuel's rise and good government, 1 Samuel 1-8. Of Samuel's resignation of the government and Saul's advancement and mal-administration, 1 Samuel 9-15. The choice of David, his struggles with Saul, Saul's ruin at last, and the opening of the way for David to the throne, 1 Samuel 16-31. And these things are written for our learning.