

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 18

This chapter gives an account of the distinct work and service of the priests and Levites, (^{<Q181E>}Numbers 18:1-7); and of several things given to the priests for their maintenance, (^{<Q181B>}Numbers 18:8-19); and of the tithes the Levites should have to live upon, since they were to have no inheritance in the land of Israel, (^{<Q181D>}Numbers 18:20-24); and of the tenth out of those tithes they were to give to the high priest, (^{<Q1825>}Numbers 18:25-32).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Aaron*, etc.] As the things spoken were such as concerned Aaron, he might be only and immediately spoken unto: thou,

and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee; meaning both priests and Levites, the priests by him and his sons, and the Levites by his father's house:

shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; the blame of any evil committed there, the punishment of it; the priests, Aaron and his sons, if they did not perform the duty of their office aright, he in the most holy place, and they in the holy place, and at the altar of burnt offering in the court; and the Levites, if they did not take care to watch in the tabernacle, and keep out strangers and polluted persons:

and thou, and thy sons with thee, shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood; be answerable for my sins, errors, and mistakes that should be committed by them in the discharge of their office, through their own remissness, or not taking care that the Levites did their duty; this shows that the office of priesthood, though honourable, was burdensome, and not to be envied; and that the people needed not to be under such terrible apprehensions as they were, lest they should come too near the sanctuary, as to be in danger of death, since it lay upon the priests and Levites especially to take care thereof, and who, if negligent, would suffer.

Ver. 2. *And to thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father*, etc.] For his father Amram was of that tribe, and so the Levites were his

brethren, as he is directed to consider them; which might serve to conciliate their minds, and make them easy with respect to his enjoyment of the priesthood:

bring them with thee; into the court of the tabernacle, for further they might not go:

that they maybe joined unto thee: as their name of Levites signifies, persons joined and united to others, as they were to the priests: see reason of their patriarch's name Levi in (⁰¹²⁸⁴Genesis 29:34);

and minister unto thee: be assisting to the priests in killing the sacrifices, receiving the blood, and flaying the beasts, and in other things about the sanctuary, (⁰⁴⁰³⁶Numbers 3:6);

but thou, and thy sons with thee, [shall minister] before the tabernacle of witness; which was the most holy place, where were the ark of the testimony or witness, and the tables of the covenant; and they might be said to minister before that, when they ministered in the holy place, which was before it, when they burned incense upon the altar of incense, ordered the shewbread, and trimmed the lamps of the candlestick, which none but the priests the sons of Aaron might do.

Ver. 3. *And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle*, etc.] That is, the Levites, whatever Aaron and his sons, the priests, should charge them to do, or commit to their care and charge, that they should observe; as to watch and keep out all unfit persons, to take down and set up the tabernacle when needful, etc.

only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary; as the ark and mercy seat in the holy of holies, the shewbread table, and candlestick in the holy place; wherefore when these were removed from place to place in journeying, they were covered, that they might not touch them as they carried them:

and the altar; both of incense and burnt offering, on neither of which might they offer:

that neither they nor you also die: the priests for suffering them to meddle with things that did not belong to them, and the Levites for intruding themselves.

Ver. 4. *And they shall be joined unto thee*, etc.] As assistants in the sacred service:

and keep the charge of tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle; (see Gill on “⁻⁰⁴⁸²Numbers 3:7”) and (see Gill on “⁻⁰⁴⁸³Numbers 3:8”);

and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you; not any of the other tribes, only such as were of the tribe of Levi; they only were to be brought with them, and joined unto them, and assist them, and minister to them, as in (⁻⁰⁴⁸²Numbers 18:2); though the Jews ^{f243} understand by a stranger anyone that was not a priest.

Ver. 5. *And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary*, etc.] That is, the priests, Aaron and his sons; the high priest was to keep the charge of the most holy place particularly, and do what was to be done in that on the day of atonement; and the common priests to keep the charge of the holy place, and do everything relating to the altar of incense, the shewbread table, and candlestick:

and the charge of the altar; of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel: as had been upon Korah and his company, (⁻⁰⁴⁸²Numbers 16:32,33), and as afterwards came on Uzziah, (⁻⁴⁴⁵⁹2 Chronicles 26:19-21).

Ver. 6. *And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites, from among the children of Israel*, etc.] (See Gill on “⁻⁰⁴⁸²Numbers 3:12”); where the same is said, only they, are here called the brethren of the priests for the reason given, (⁻⁰⁴⁸²Numbers 18:2);

to you [they are] given [as] a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; (see Gill on “⁻⁰⁴⁸²Numbers 3:7”), (see Gill on “⁻⁰⁴⁸³Numbers 3:8”), and (see Gill on “⁻⁰⁴⁸³Numbers 3:9”).

Ver. 7. *Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest’s office*, etc.] Observe all the duties of it, and keep out others from intruding into it:

for everything of the altar: both of incense and of burnt offering with respect to burning incense on the one, and offering sacrifices on the other; both were to be done by priests, and by no other:

and within the vail; in the most holy place, where the high priest entered but once a year, and he only with incense, and the blood of sacrifices, (see ^{<807>}Hebrews 9:7);

and ye shall serve; do all the business that is to be done at either altar, whether in the court, or in the holy place, and whatsoever is to be done in the most holy place within the vail:

I have given your priest's office [unto you] as a service of gift; it was not what they had taken to themselves of their own will, or had thrust themselves into, but what the Lord had called them to, and had freely invested them with, (see ^{<808>}Hebrews 5:4);

and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death; any common person, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; any Israelite, one that is a stranger from the priests, though a Levite, as Aben Ezra; such an one might not come either to the altar of burnt offering to offer any sacrifice upon it, or the altar of incense, to burn incense on that, or trim the lamps, or put the shewbread in order, or to do anything peculiar to the priest's office.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord spake unto Aaron*, etc.] Having pointed out to him the duty of his office, he now informs him of the perquisites of it; or having told him what was his work, now what his wages, or what was his service, and now his maintenance:

behold, I also have given thee the charge of my heave offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; such as the heave shoulder and wave breast, and firstfruits, and all other holy things in general, such as were the most holy things; as in (^{<0489>}Numbers 18:9); and the lighter holy things, as the Jews call them, (^{<0481>}Numbers 18:11); the charge of these was given to keep for themselves, and for their families:

unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing: because of his office as a priest, to which he was consecrated by anointing:

and to thy sons by an ordinance for ever; (see ^{<0374>}Leviticus 7:34-36).

Ver. 9. *This shall be thine of the most holy things*, etc.] For, as observed, there were some lighter and lesser holy things or sacrifices, and others superlatively so: and those are begun with, such as were

[reserved] from the fire; those parts of sacrifices which were not burnt with fire on the altar of burnt offerings:

every oblation of theirs; which is a general word, including various offerings, the particulars follow;

every meat offering of theirs: or bread offering, for they were made of fine flour and oil, and burnt on the altar, the remainder of which was eaten by Aaron and his sons, (^{<RB54>}Leviticus 6:14-18);

every sin offering of theirs; which was offered to make atonement for sin, which also belonged to the priests and their sons, excepting such whose blood was carried into the most holy place, (^{<RB55>}Leviticus 6:25-30);

and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me; which was offered for a trespass committed; what remained of this also, when burnt on the altar, was eaten by the priest and his sons, (^{<RB56>}Leviticus 7:5,6); and this sacrifice was a ram, when a trespass was committed, either in the holy things of the Lord, or in wrongs done to men, (^{<RB57>}Leviticus 5:15 6:6); Jarchi interprets it of an offering for a trespass committed by rapine or violence to a stranger: these, all of them, it is added,

[shall be] most holy for thee and for thy sons; for their use, and for theirs only.

Ver. 10. *In the most holy [place] shalt thou eat it*, etc.] Not in the holy of holies, eminently so called, nor in the holy place, for they were neither of them places to eat in; but in the tent of the congregation, as Aben Ezra, or court, as Jarchi; called most holy, in distinction from and in comparison of the camp of Israel, and their tents, as afterwards of Jerusalem, and their houses there, where they might not eat the most holy things:

every male shall eat it; the sons of priests, and they only, not their wives, nor their daughters, and therefore not to be eaten at home, or in their own houses:

it shall be holy unto thee; separated only for the use of him and his sons.

Ver. 11. *And this [is] thine*, etc.] What follow, which appertained to the priests, are the less or lighter holy things:

the heave offering of their gift: the right shoulder, given to the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of peace offerings, (^{<RB52>}Leviticus 7:32);

according to Jarchi, it was what was lifted up or heaved from the thank offering, the peace offerings, and the ram of the Nazarites, (see ^{<R74>}Leviticus 7:14,32 ^{<H19>}Numbers 6:19,20);

with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; which were waved to and fro before the Lord, as the breast of the peace offerings, called therefore the wave breast, (^{<R73>}Leviticus 7:30,34);

I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; for these were to be eaten in their own houses, and by their families, wives, children, and servants bought with their money, or born in their houses; but not hired servants, nor sojourners, nor strangers; nor their daughters married to strangers though, if widows, or divorced, and without children, and returned to their father's house, they might eat of them, (^{<R20>}Leviticus 22:10-13); thus a provision was made for the maintenance of the priests of the Lord and their families, until the Messiah should come; who has also appointed that they that preach the Gospel should live of it, (^{<H13>}1 Corinthians 9:13,14);

everyone that is clean in thy house shall eat of it: that was clean in a ceremonial sense; had not touched a dead body, etc. Jarchi says, this is said to comprehend his wife; but that might be concluded from what is said before, for if his children, much more might his wife eat of it.

Ver. 12. *All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat*, etc.] Or the "fat" ^{f244} of them; the fat of anything being the best, (see ^{<R14>}Deuteronomy 32:14);

the firstfruits of them: the oil, and wine, and wheat:

which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee; this Jarchi calls the great heave offering, the firstfruits of their harvest and vintage, which being offered to the Lord, was given to the priests: the quantity is not fixed, but left to the generosity of the people, and was a free gift; liberal men would give a fortieth part, those of a meaner spirit a fiftieth, and niggardly ones a sixtieth, and less than that was not given (see Gill on ^{<R29>}Exodus 22:29"); compare with this (^{<R53>}Ezekiel 45:13).

Ver. 13. *[And] whatsoever is first ripe in the land*, etc.] Of any other sort of fruit, figs, pomegranates, apples, plums, pears, etc. besides olives and vines;

which they shall bring unto the Lord, shall be thine; which they shall bring in a basket to the tabernacle, where it was, or to the temple, when built: this the priests were to have, (see ^{<OR12>}Deuteronomy 26:2-4);

everyone that is clean in thine house shall eat of it; (see Gill on ^{<OR11>}Numbers 18:11”).

Ver. 14. *Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.*] Fields, houses, cattle, etc. if absolutely devoted to the Lord, they were the priest’s; but if devoted to certain uses, they were appropriated to those uses, as the repairs of the temple, etc. (see ^{<OR20>}Leviticus 27:1-34).

Ver. 15. *Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh,* etc.] The firstborn of every creature:

which they bring unto the Lord; as they were obliged, he claiming it as his own, (^{<OR13>}Exodus 13:2);

[whether it be] of men or beasts, shall be thine; every firstborn of either, being the Lord’s, became the priest’s by his gift:

nevertheless, the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem; that is, take the redemption price for it, which was five shekels, as in (^{<OR16>}Numbers 18:16); for the original proprietor was, strictly speaking, the redeemer, and paid the money, and the priest was the receiver, to whom it was paid; (see ^{<OR13>}Exodus 13:13);

and the firstlings of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem; with lambs, as an ass, which is put for unclean beasts, is ordered to be redeemed with a lamb, or its neck to be broken, (^{<OR13>}Exodus 13:13); the Africans, the shepherds among them, as Herodotus relates ^{f245}, of their firstlings they cut off the ear of the beast and throw it over a house, and then turn its neck back, for they worship only the sun and moon; which seems to be an imitation of this law.

Ver. 16. *And those that are to be redeemed,* etc.] Which is to be understood not of unclean beasts last mentioned, for they were redeemed with lambs and not with money; and after they were eight days and not a month old, as follows, (^{<OR13>}Exodus 13:13 22:30); but of the firstborn of men:

from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation: that is, take the redemption money next mentioned; and though both time and

price are fixed, yet said to be according to the estimation of the priest; (see ^{<R276>}Leviticus 27:5,6);

for the money of five shekels; which was about eleven or twelve shillings of our money, and is the price given for the redemption of the firstborn, when the Levites were taken in their stead, (^{<O137>}Numbers 3:47);

after the shekel of the sanctuary, which [is] twenty gerahs, (see Gill on ^{<O137>}Numbers 3:47"); of the manner of redeeming the firstborn, (see Gill on ^{<O135>}Exodus 13:15").

Ver. 17. *But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem*, etc.] That is, shalt not take the redemption price for them, but the creatures themselves; which they, the priests, were to take for their own use:

they [are] holy; separated to the Lord, and therefore not to be used in common by men, but were sacred to the Lord, or became the property of his priests; (see ^{<B519>}Deuteronomy 15:19); how they were to be made use of follows:

thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar; for they were to be sacrificed, and their blood used as in other sacrifices:

and shalt burn their fat [for] an offering made by fire; for a sweet savour unto the Lord; as the fat of other sacrifices was, and particularly of the peace offerings, which were wholly eaten otherwise, (^{<R173>}Leviticus 7:31).

Ver. 18. *And the flesh of them shall be thine*, etc.] For him and his family to eat of, whether blemished or perfect the Jews say ^{f246}:

as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine: which were his part of the peace offerings, for him and his sons to eat of, (^{<R173>}Leviticus 7:34); and the Jews observe ^{f247}, that as the wave breast and heave shoulder of the peace offerings might be eaten in two days and one night, so might those of the firstlings.

Ver. 19. *All the heave offerings of the holy things*, etc.] All before mentioned, and whatsoever comes under that name:

which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord; either by his commandment, or of their own freewill;

have I given thee, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: so providing for their maintenance by an irrevocable law as long as their priesthood lasted, even until the Messiah should come:

it [is] a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee, and thy seed with thee: an incorruptible, inviolable, durable covenant, which should last for ever, even until the Gospel dispensation or world to come should take place; and it would remain ever before the Lord in his sight, who would take care it should never be made void, but stand fast with Aaron and his posterity as long as his priesthood endured.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord spake unto Aaron,* etc.] What is said, being what concerned the tribe of Levi, at the head of which Aaron was, even concerning the maintenance of the Levites:

thou shalt have no inheritance in their land; in the land of Israel when they come to possess it, as the rest of the tribes had:

neither shalt thou have any part among them; any part of the land when it is divided by lot, as it was in the times of Joshua, when taken from the Canaanites; no tract of land was peculiarly assigned to them as were to the other tribes, as fields, nor vineyards; they had cities appointed them, and they had houses and fields devoted to the Lord which fell to them, and others they had by gift or legacy, or by purchase, as had Jeremiah the priest and Barnabas the Levite, (^{281b}Jeremiah 32:9) (^{406b}Acts 4:36,37); but they had no share in the distribution of the land of Canaan at the time of the division of it among the tribes; no, not even in the spoil of the cities of the land of Canaan, when they were conquered; this Maimonides ^{f248} says they were warned not to take; and a son of Levi that took any part of the spoil was to be beaten; but the spoil of other lands, subdued by the kings of Israel, they might take, as other Israelites did: the reason of all this was, because they had a sufficient provision made for them in another way, and that they might not be entangled in worldly affairs, or spend their time in the culture of fields and vineyards, but wholly give themselves to the service of God in his house:

I [am] thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel; in things temporal, the offerings, tithes, firstfruits, etc. which were given to the Lord, being bestowed upon them; and in things spiritual, they being employed in the work and service of God, and having a peculiar nearness to him, and communion with him: so all that are made priests unto God, as

all believers in Christ are, (^{<4015>}1 Peter 2:5,9), have God for their portion and inheritance; God, in his persons and in all his perfections, and under every character, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, is the portion of his people; and a rich, large, and satisfying portion he is, and which is inexhaustible, and will endure for ever; he is their portion in life and at death, in time and to all eternity; (see ^{<1973>}Psalm 73:26 142:5 ^{<1034>}Leviticus 3:14).

Ver. 21. *And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance,* etc.] The tenth part of the produce of the land; of the wheat, barley, oil, and wine; the tenth part of their harvest and vintage; so that though they were the least of the tribes, they had the greatest share of the increase of the land, and that without any labour or expense; the other having but nine parts among them all, and at the charge and labour of manuring, cultivating, etc. and this they were to have

for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; (see ^{<0483>}Numbers 18:3-6).

Ver. 22. *Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] To do any part of the priest's office, as to burn incense, as Korah and his company had done; or to do any part of the work of the Levites, by watching in the tabernacle, by taking it down and setting it up, and bearing the vessels of it; otherwise they might come to it, to bring their sacrifices, to pay their vows, and for their purification when necessary, and such like things:

lest they bear sin and die; lest sin be charged upon them, and punishment be inflicted, even the punishment of death; for it was death to intrude into the priest's office.

Ver. 23. *But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] In guarding the tabernacle, that no unclean persons enter into it, or any others take anything out of it, and in assisting the priests in their service, and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary when required:

and they shall bear their iniquity: that is, when they fail in the duty of their office, are not careful in their service and work, and business appointed them; if either they did not do their business themselves, or suffered others to do it, or such to come to the tabernacle who should not, they would be blameworthy and suffer for it:

[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations, that the children of Israel they have no inheritance; having such a plentiful provision made for them, by a statute as durable as this.

Ver. 24. *But the tithe of the children of Israel,* etc.] The tenth of the produce of their land, as before:

which they offer [as] an heave offering unto the Lord: by way of gratitude to him for giving them the land, and for making it so fruitful to them, and as an acknowledgment of his being the sovereign Lord and proprietor of it:

I have given to the Levites to inherit; so that the Levites had the tithe not immediately from the Israelites, nor were they dependent on them for them; but they were first given to the Lord, and then by him to the Levites, who held them of him, and not of the Israelites; and were a portion and an inheritance, settled upon them by the Lord himself, which they had as good a right and title unto as the rest of the tribes had to their several inheritances:

therefore have I said unto them, among the children, of Israel they shall have no inheritance; as in (⁰⁴⁸²³Numbers 18:23).

Ver. 25. *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] And not unto Aaron, because a tithe out of the tithe was to be given to Aaron, as Aben Ezra observes, and it was not so proper that he should have this order to deliver to the Levites, in which he and his sons were so much concerned, and therefore it was given to Moses to acquaint them of it:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 26. *Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them,* etc.] Aaron was to tell them what a provision would be made for them on account of their service, but Moses was to inform them what part Aaron was to have out of it:

when ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance; which was done at the time of their harvest, and of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth:

then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord; in token of gratitude for the liberal provision he had made for the maintenance of them:

[even] a tenth [part] of the tithe; a tenth part out of the tenth of the produce of the land of Israel.

Ver. 27. *And [this] your heave offering*, etc.] The tithe of the tithe, which though not properly heaved or lifted up, as the heave offerings, strictly so called, were, any more than the tithe itself, (^{<04824>}Numbers 18:24); yet is so called, because separated to the use and service of the Lord, as they were:

shall be reckoned unto you, as though [it were] the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress; that is, it should be as acceptable to God as if they had fields and vineyards, threshing floors, and wine presses of their own, from whence corn and wine were taken, as the Israelites when they received their tithes from them; and what remained they had as good a right unto, and might make use of as their own, as well as they; (see ^{<04830>}Numbers 18:30).

Ver. 28. *Thus you also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord*, etc.] As the Israelites did when they paid tithes to them, (^{<04824>}Numbers 18:24);

of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel; which heave offering was a tenth part of them:

and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest; that is, the said tenth part of the tithe was to be given not to Aaron only, as the high priest, as some have thought, and so to his successors in the high priesthood; but to him and his sons, even to all the priests in common, the high priest having his share of it; and Josephus ^{f249} is clear for it, that the tithe of the annual fruits was paid to the Levites, and to the priests. Hecataeus, an Heathen writer, who lived in the times of Alexander the great, says ^{f250}, that all the priests of the Jews received the tenth of whatsoever was produced, and ministered things in common, and were 1500 in number.

Ver. 29. *Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord*, etc.] Not only out of their tithes, but out of whatsoever gifts were given by the Israelites to them, and out of the produce of the fields which belonged to their cities, (^{<04834>}Numbers 35:4); the Levites were to take a tenth, and bring it to the Lord as an heave offering; that is, they were to give it to the priests, to testify their gratitude for everything they had, and to sanctify the rest unto them, and confirm their right and title to it, and give them the free use of it:

of all the best thereof, [even] the hallowed part thereof, out of it; which was the tenth part, for that Was holy, as Aben Ezra says, and that was to be the best of it, which was always to be given to the Lord.

Ver. 30. *Therefore thou shalt say unto them,* etc.] The Targum of Jonathan is,

“thou shalt say to them the priests;”

but the words seem manifestly spoken to the Levites:

when ye have heaved the best thereof from it; taken out the tenth part of it, and that the best:

then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the wine press; then what remains shall be reckoned as much their own, and may be as lawfully enjoyed, as the corn of the threshing floor, and the wine of the wine fat, of any Israelite whatever.

Ver. 31. *And ye shall eat it in every place,* etc.] In any of their tents or dwelling houses, not being obliged to eat it in the tabernacle, where the priests, were obliged to eat many of their holy things, and second tithes were only to be eaten at Jerusalem, (^{<5142>}Deuteronomy 14:22,23); but the Levites might eat theirs any where, in any place, clean or unclean, according to Jarchi; for, he says, it might be eaten even in a graveyard; but Aben Ezra much better, in a clean place, be that where it would:

ye, and your households; they and their wives, their sons and daughters, their servants, whether bought or hired; and they might sell it to strangers, to purchase other necessaries with. The Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the priests; but the Levites only are plainly spoken of:

for it [is] your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation; which is said to encourage them in their work, and animate them to it, as well as to clear their right to such a maintenance against all objections; for the labourer is worthy of his reward, as those that labour in the word and doctrine are of theirs, (^{<5487>}1 Timothy 5:17,18).

Ver. 32. *And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it,* etc.] Shall have no blame laid upon them, or guilt imputed to them, or punishment inflicted on them, on account of their having and enjoying their tithes and gifts:

when ye have heaved from it the best of it; took out the tenth, and that the best, and given it to the priests; or otherwise they would be blameworthy, guilty, and liable to punishment:

neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel; the gifts they have given for holy uses, and so are holy; which would be the case if they ate of them, or enjoyed them, without giving the priests the tenth part of them:

lest ye die; for it seems such a neglect was punishable with death.