

reason authorises those, who of themselves are destitute of means of living, to apply for succour to other men; yet they cannot, in case of refusal, insist upon it by force, or procure it by open violence. 'Tis obvious, without our having any occasion to mention it here, that obligation answers exactly to right, and is more or less strong, perfect, or imperfect, according as right itself is perfect or imperfect.

Thirdly, another distinction worthy of our attention, is, that there are rights which may be lawfully renounced, and others that cannot. A creditor, for example, may forgive a sum due to him, if he pleases, either in the whole or part; but a father cannot renounce the right he has over his children, nor leave them in an intire independance. The reason of this difference is, that there are rights which of themselves have a natural connection with our duties, and are given to man only as means to perform them. To renounce this sort of rights, would be therefore renouncing our duty, which is never allowed. But with respect to rights that no way concern our duties, the renunciation of them is licit, and only a matter of prudence. Let us illustrate this with another example. Man cannot absolutely, and without any manner of reserve, renounce his liberty; for this would be manifestly throwing himself into a necessity of doing wrong, were he so commanded by the person to whom he has made this subjection. But 'tis lawful for us to renounce a part of our liberty, if we find ourselves better enabled thereby to discharge our duties, and to acquire some certain and reasonable advantage. 'Tis with these modifications