

This reply is grounded on an ambiguity, or sup-<sup>Answer.</sup>poses the thing in question. It supposes all along, that there neither is, nor can be, any other obligation, but that which proceeds from a superior or law. I agree, that such is the common language of civilians ; but this makes no manner of alteration in the nature of the thing. What comes afterwards proves nothing at all. 'Tis true that man may, if he has a mind, withdraw himself from the obligations which reason imposes on him ; but if he does, 'tis at his peril, and he is forced himself to acknowledge, that such a conduct is quite unreasonable. But to conclude from thence that reason alone cannot oblige us, is going too far ; because this consequence would equally invalidate the obligation imposed by a superior. For in fine, the obligation produced by law is not subversive of liberty ; we have always a power to submit to it or not, and run the hazard of the consequence. In short, the question is not concerning force or constraint, 'tis only in relation to a moral tie, which in what manner soever it be considered, is always the work of reason.

XII. True it is, that duty, pursuant to its proper and strict signification, is a debt ; and that when we consider it thus, it presents the idea of an action which somebody has a right to require of us. I agree likewise, that this manner of considering duty is just in itself. Man constitutes part of a system or whole ; in consequence whereof he has necessary relations to other beings ; and the actions of man viewed in this light, having always some relation to

Duty may be taken in a loose or strict sense.