

Letter from Newton to Henry Oldenburg, dated 21 September 1672

Author: Isaac Newton

Source: MS Add. 9597/2/18/27, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK

Published online: February 2013

<27r>

Cambridg.
Sept 21 1672.

Sir

That letter which you directed to Stoake in answer to mine from thence I received not as I told you, formerly, but your last wherein you repeated the contents of that I received, & am troubled that I have answered it no sooner; especially since I was obliged to thank you for the Transactions of July, & more particularly for your elegant translation of my Letter published in them, & for the trouble you was pleased to take upon you in inquiring of M^r Cock about his Telescopes.

To comply with your intimation of communicating Experiments proper for determining the Quæres which that Letter contained I drew up a series of such Experiments on designe to reduce the Theory of colours to Propositions & prove each Proposition from one or more of those Experiments by the assistance of common notions set down in the form of Definitions & Axioms in imitation of the Method by which Mathematicians are wont to prove their doctrines. And that occasioned my suspension of an answer, in hopes my next should have contained the said designe. But before it was finished falling upon some other buisness, of which I have my hands full, I was obliged to lay it aside, & now know not when I shall take it again into Consideration.

However if the Answer to M^r Hooks Considerations will conduce to the determination of any of those Quæres (as in some particulars I think it will) you may if you think fit, publish it; To which end I desire you to mitigate any expressions that seem <27v> harsh, that its publication as you intimated may be done to common satisfaction. And though I intend at present nothing further for the publick, yet if to any of your private acquaintance that endeavour to satisfy themselves by an experimentall determination of those Quæres, Experiments sufficient to determin them all occur not; upon your intimation of the particulars which they stick at, I shall for your sake doe my endeavour as much as I can in short to supply what they desire

I have not yet perused those two books you mention. But by your description of the first in the Transactions it seems to contain a Doctrin most highly probable, & in the latter I expect to meet with many things as improbable. And then that particular which you mention I know not what can be more difficult.

I am sorry for the miscarriage of your afforesaid letter & blame my selfe for my Postscript suspecting that may have occasioned in yours what you would not have fall into other hands then those of

Sir

Your humble Servant

Newton.

<27av>

These

To Henry Oldenburg Esquire
at his house about the middle
of the old Pall-Mail in

Westminster

London.

Received Sept. 23. 72

2

Answered Sept. 24.

Received Sept. 23. 72. Answered Sept. 24. of Salvetti's making his Telescope: to move him to prosecute it, as well as to put out of doubt his doctrine of Colors. Of Th. Huyck. Of Hugen's his sense about his doctrine of Colors.
