

# Letter from Newton to Henry Oldenburg, dated 25 January 1675/6

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<50r>

Jan. 25. 16 $\frac{75}{76}$ .

Sir

I received both your's & thank you for your care in disposing those things between me & M<sup>r</sup> Linus. I suppose his friends cannot blame you at all for printing his first Letter, it being written I beleive for that end, & they never complaining of the printing of that but of the not printing that which followed, which I take my self to have been per accidens the occasion of by refusing to answer him. And though I think I may truly say I was very little concern'd about it, yet I must look upon it as the result of your kindnes to me that you was unwilling to print it without an answer.

As to the Paper of Observations which you move in the name of the Society to have printed, I cannot but return them my hearty thanks for the kind acceptance they meet with there; & know not how to deny any thing which they desire should be done. Only I think it will be best to suspend the printing of them for a while because I have some thoughts of writing such another set of Observations for determining the manner of the production of colours by the Prism, which, if done at all, ought to precede that now in your hands, & will do best to be joyned with it. But this I cannot do presently by reason of some incumbrances lately put upon me by some friends, & some other buisines of my own which at present almost take up my time & thoughts.

The additions that I intended, I think I must after putting you to so long expectations disappoint you in: for it puzzles me how to connect them with what I sent you; & if I had those papers yet I doubt the things I intended will not come in so freely as I thought they might have done. I could send them described without dependance on those papers, but I fear I have already troubled the Society & your self too much with my scribbling, & so suppose it may do better to defer them till another season. I have therefore at present only sent you two or three alterations though not of so great moment that I need have stayed you for them: & they are these.

Where I say that the frame of nature may be nothing but Æther condensed by a fermental principle, instead of those words write that it may be nothing but various contextures of some certain æthereal spirits or vapours condensed as it were by precipitation, much after the manner that vapors are condensed into water or exhalations into grosser substances, though not so easily condensable; & after condensation wrought into various forms, at first by the immediate hand of the Creator, & ever since by the power of nature, who by virtue of the command Increas & multiply. <50v> {became} a complete imitator of the copies set her by the Protoplast. Thus perhaps may all things be originated from æther, &c.

A little after where I say the æthereal spirit may be condensed in fermenting or burning bodies or otherwise inspissated in the pores of the earth to a tender matter which may be as it were the succus nutritious of the earth or primary substance out of which things generable grow: instead of this you may write that that spirit may be condensed in fermenting or burning bodies or otherwise coagulated in the pores of the earth & water into some kind of humid active matter for the continual uses of nature, adhering to the sides of those pores after the manner that vapors condense on the sides of a vessel.

In the same paragraph there is, I think, a parenthesis in which I mention volatile Saltpeter, pray strike out that Parenthesis least it should give offence to somebody.

Also where I relate the experiment of little papers made to move variously with a glas rubbed, I would have all that struck out which follows about trying the experiment with leaf gold. Sir I am interrupted by a visit & so must in hast break of

Yours

Is. Newton

Jan 25. 7 $\frac{5}{6}$ .

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