

Newton's transcription of a letter from Leibniz, c. May 1714

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Source: MS Add. 9597/2/18/96, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK

Published online: February 2013

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Sir

I am obliged to you as well for the communication of the Letter of the excellent M^r Wotton — as for your obliging offer to mediate a good understanding between M^r Newton & me. It was not I that interrupted it. One M^r Keil inserted something against me in one of your Philosophical Transactions. I was much surprised at it & demanded reparation by a Letter to D^r Sloane Secretary of the Society. D^r Sloane sent me a discourse of M^r Keil where he justified what he said after a manner which reflected even upon my integrity. I took this for a private animosity peculiar to that person without having the least suspicion that the Society & M^r Newton himself took part therein. And not judging it worth the while to enter into a dispute with a man ill instructed in former affairs, & supposing also that M^r Newton himself being better informed of that which had passed, would do me justice, I continued only to demand that satisfaction which was due to me. But I know not by what chicanery & deceit some brought it about that this matter was taken as if I were pleading before the Society, & submitted my self to their jurisdiction, which I never thought of. And according to justice they should have let me know that the Society would examin the bottom of this affair & have given me opportunity to declare if I would propose my reasons & if I did not hold any of the Judges for suspected. So they have given sentence, one side only being heard, in such a manner that the nullity is visible. Also I do not at all beleive that the judgment which is given can be taken for a final judgment of the Society. Yet M^r Newton has caused it to be published to the world by a book printed expresly for discrediting me & sent it into Germany into France & into Italy as in the name of the Society. This pretended judgment & this affront done without cause to one of the most ancient members of the Society it self, & who has done it no dishonour, will find but few approvers in the world. And in the Society it self I hope that all the members will not agree to it. The able men among the French, Italians & others disapprove highly of this proceeding & are astonished at it, & I have several Letters upon it in my hands. The proofs produced against me appear to them very short.

As for me I have always carried my self with the greatest respect that could be towards M^r Newton. And tho it appears now that there is great room to doubt whether he knew my invention before he had it from me, yet I have spoken as if he had of himself found something like my method: but being abused by some flatterers ill advised he has taken the liberty to attaque me in a manner very sensible. Judge now, Sir, from what side that should principally come which is requisite to terminate this controversy. I have not yet seen the book published against me being at Vienna which is in the furthest part of Germany where such books come very slowly, & I have not thought it worth the while to send for it by the Post. So I have not yet been able to make such an Apology as the affair requires. But others have already taken care of my reputation. I abhor disobliging disputes among men of Letters & have always avoyded them; but at present all means possible have been taken to engage me in them. If the evil could be redressed Sir by your interposition, which you offer so obliginly, I should be very glad; & I am already very much obliged to you for it.
