

(7)

1872 (2)

After Feb 1872  
before Sep 1872

[c. 9/1/94?]

My dear Judge Russell:

I am very much obliged to you for your kind letter received today. The reason I did not write at first was partly because I was very much occupied & partly that I am an extremely bad correspondent especially toward those I most care for, because I am not satisfied to write such letters as I can write. But afterwards came two special reasons for not writing. One was that I seemed to be drifting into an unpleasant state of things with Hegeler & I did not think it fair to ~~draw~~ draw you into it & the other was that I did not wish to say much about my relations with Hegeler because I did not comprehend them. I don't know how what the matter with Hegeler is. It is quite clear to me that his state of mind is entirely different from what you suppose it to be, that for some reason or other he is violently inimical to me. I dare say I may be greatly at fault in some way, & probably more than you seem to think, <sup>as I continue writing or reading your letter & begin perhaps to see</sup> but how I am so, I really don't at all comprehend. That you don't rightly understand the matter is clear from this, that Hegeler has told Carno that he don't want anything from me accepted for the Minister's Open Court whether to be paid for or not. I have a system of philosophy which I was very anxious to sketch out in its several parts & show the connection of them. I should have been glad also to show the reasons that support it, but that I was less anxious to do. I wanted at least to say what it was. I regret that I could not do so. Hegeler never wanted me to publish my

papers. He reluctantly consented for a while then objected & finally talked  
 to reporters about "leading" me "off." As for Cairns, I think if it were  
 not for Hegeler, he would give me some aid to say my say, - at least, he  
 wishes me to think so, and I haven't very closely considered whether he  
 is sincere about it or not. I think he has very little regard for the  
 proprieties of debate. For instance, his <sup>citations of</sup> ~~quotations from~~ Scotus are  
 simply false. Anybody who knows anything about Scotus can see that.  
 But I could mention a lot of other things. But I don't care a  
 straw for all that.

I am going as hard at work as I possibly can be. I have one  
 volume of my logic complete, the deductive part. I was induced to  
 finish that first because I had a positive order for it from a repu-  
 table firm. But when it was ready instead of taking it, they put  
 it into the hands of a reader whose judgment of it was simply ridicu-  
 lous. But his judgment was entirely favourable, and he recommended  
 the publication. The publishers thereupon promptly rejected it & wrote  
 me saying they had not the slightest doubt it would be a success! All these  
 inconsistencies can only be accounted for by supposing them to be very  
 much affected by the state of business. I intend to offer it to other  
 publishers but am holding it back in order to make some alterations  
 which I have no time to make at present.

That some publishing house had already urged me to write a geometry  
 and I was thus decided to do it, or rather very radically to revise <sup>and</sup> ~~my~~  
 rewrite my father's book before I finished the logic. I thought it  
 would only take me a few weeks. But it has proved a much harder

task than I supposed. And I doubt it being successful as a text book, although I have had the matter under advisement for many years have tried my method with a class & had written considerable parts of it.

My arithmetic has been finished also all but the examples and part of the advanced book. But it has been rewritten & rewritten in the effort to adapt it to children & is now in the hands of a lady for criticism. I am rushing everything to try to get that to press. But my idea is to finish the geometry first & I hope it won't take me much longer.

No person can understand what the nature of my difficulties are. Besides the "eccentricity of genius" which seems to consist in being a perfect idiot in all dealings with human beings, in my case, I have to contend with certain peculiarities in the health & mind of some of those I have to think of, which I certainly ought not to explain, & ought not even to hint at them as I am doing, but which would account for certain things for which I am violently blamed.

The only objection I should have to you or anybody writing about my philosophy is that my philosophy has never been stated even in the most general outline. It is absolutely impossible to get the slightest comprehension of it until certain sides of it not yet touched upon are ~~so~~ sketched & the way the different parts fit together to form one unitary conception are explained. I defy the greatest intellect, - I would defy Aristotle himself, -

4

to see in a general way what I am driving at from what I have said so far. As I cannot get any help to say it, I mean to publish it myself. My Principles of Philosophy has only been advertised once in the Nation. That brought me in about 100 subscribers & I certainly think it encourages. I have sent out a few circulars, - very few. It is pretty clear to me the publication will pay for itself, but I must first be at leisure. If I can finish my geometry & arithmetic, perhaps I shall have enough in come to manage it.

As to personal credit for my system I am not thinking of that. It is a mere flatus vocis, except so far as prestige means power to bring ~~out~~ my philosophy before the public & gain their ear. I am one of the men who do not inspire confidence of my kind & people calmly assume I have various radical incapacities which I have not & which they have no reason to suppose I have.

You speak of my obscurity. I think my "obscurity" arises from this, that having an enormous amount of thinking to bring before the public, it is a hard task at best for a person to see what I mean. But then I can't even get myself expressed in the merest outline, - and an outline of such views must be obscure. I shall be clear enough when I am spread over 12 volumes. My theory of the universe is a good deal more difficult intrinsically than the theory of Perturbations. How can it be otherwise considering

the immensely greater complexity of the problem? Now how foolish it is to try to popularize the theory of Perturbations Herschel's *Dialectics* shows, which is at once far too hard to be popular, and far too popular to be correct even in the outline of the subject. To my mind it is futile to undertake to give people any philosophy of <sup>whose</sup> ~~any~~ value rises as high as zero without requiring them to think as hard as a man has to think to read a book on differential equations.

The duty of a man who has valuable thoughts is to get ~~thoughts~~ those thoughts stated, that is as much as he can generally do. If he has such wonderful power that he can also state them so that he not only imparts them to those who alone can receive them, - namely those who think, - but also excites the applause of those who are incapable of thought and therefore cannot get those thoughts, perhaps that may be his duty. He will I suppose state them as clearly as he knows how. However, that is not the case with me. I have far less chance of being heard or listened to if I pretend to make the idle understand than if I do not. Were I to write to riddle no person to whom what I have to say could be intelligible would pay the slightest attention to me. Would you have Klein write his *Icosahedron* so that the *Sunday World* would find it acceptable? I can write in a light and agreeable way, and can get



(6)

a little work of that kind from time to time. But it is ~~shabby~~ strictly on condition I never reveal or even hint at anything which I have to contribute to the world's thought or knowledge - Nobody would publish it if I did, - certainly not Hegeler, - and if it were published no thinker would go to such a writing with the idea of thinking about it. If I wish to contribute to human knowledge I must do so, as everybody else does, in the forms which real thinkers like.

But as I am on very short commons & my wife too, I should be extremely glad of any opportunity to earn a little money either by writing, teaching, <sup>lecturing,</sup> or in any way whatever. I am a tremendous worker & very adaptable. I don't at all insist on airing my own views. On the contrary, prefer not to do so. Never would do so in anything intended for general readers except with a view to earning more money or more easily that way than another way.

I don't know that it ever occurred to me Cairns was jealous of me. I don't rate Cairns very high certainly. I don't think him or Hegeler either at all "liberal," if you mean broad and tolerant. I think them very narrow, as all the Büchenerite sect are for the most part. But I don't think Cairns has sufficient understanding of what thought is to be jealous of my power of thought & what else he could be jealous of I can't see.

7

I have a very high respect & a sort of veneration for Hegeler. I think his ideals are admirable & the whole morale of the man high, though he is too arrogant and too little aware that truth is not something to be pushed like a business. I think he ~~is~~ says to himself "Now here is this Pence. Judge Russell and others say that I could do the world some good by helping him. Besides, he is rather an interesting man, I can see. I will see if I can't help him." But for some reason or other, perhaps because he has made up his mind my philosophy is pernicious, he is now only anxious to put me down.

That I am extravagant & heedless about money to put the thing in its mildest terms I must acknowledge. Neither do I for a single instant feel anything but a heavy load of obligation toward Mr. Hegeler. I certainly have not the slightest desire to have him do anything more for me in a financial way. On the contrary, the thing which is driving me crazy is how I can ever get clear of this situation.

But Hegeler is not desirous of having me edit Matt's Logic or collect my papers. The former was never broached by him. The latter he was persuaded to consent to publish; then expressed his reluctance; finally when I had broken with another publisher flatly refused.

You are mistaken in saying "he will take anything

from you that is desirable paying you for it at the regular rates he has before paid for your work." On the contrary I sent him on a number of things and said if they were liked I had a variety of other things and if none of them were liked would write on any subject not committing me against my conscience, and would make an effort to please him. Would consent also to taking only a portion in cash the rest to go to my credit on his books. The answer came back that Mr. Hegeler did not wish any of my work to be accepted.

When you say you hope I will "let up" on Mr. Hegeler you do me a very serious injustice. I have never attacked or accused him or complained or been wanting in any way of the highest esteem for him. I think he has some peculiarities; but nothing in comparison with his grand and noble character. ~~He~~ He seems to me to be changeable; and but what I have said all along was that I could not comprehend what was the difficulty, my horrible business habits I suppose; from what you now say. Certainly I am very culpable in that respect.

Among the papers I sent to Hegeler & which he rejected were some articles on the Critic of Arguments. I much prefer to keep out of philoso-



9

phy ~~all~~ altogether in writing for Hegeler, because they absolutely refuse to allow me any reply to Cairns, though I think he is absolutely slanderous in talking of my holding that there are two truths etc. doctrines that no philosopher holds or ever did hold except that "Dammned Averroes" as Scotus calls him.

I entirely agree with you about avoiding controversy. I detest it & with you think it helps very little. I only replied to Cairns because he having devoted 2 long articles to me, it seemed courtesy required me ~~to~~ not to pass them by with the appearance of indifference I really felt. As for the trichism, Cairns is entirely mistaken in supposing that that is the chief feature of my philosophy. It is only the one that ~~was~~ had to be brought forward in the first instance in order to explain what my philosophy was.

If you can talk Hegeler sound, why you may be sure, that I shall be as grateful as I can be. In point of fact there are some features of my philosophy which chime in remarkably with his views of immortality, though I don't think ~~they~~ ~~is~~ are quite satisfactory. But what I would like would be to ~~see~~ <sup>have</sup> an article in every chronicle (or every other one) until I can sketch

10  
my whole system. After that I should be glad if I could  
have further space to argue it; for I have really argued  
nothing except the typhus. That argument will  
rest on observations, some new & some old.

I should also be glad to be allowed say one page or  
two in each Open Court (or every other one) on Logic  
or preferably the History of Science, or any other subjects  
or subjects that may be agreeable. I don't object to  
articles being returned they don't like provided the  
reasons can be made so definite that I can avoid  
the objectionable features.

This is what I tried to bring about through  
Carus some time ago; but for some reason it  
did not work. Hegeler was just as insulting and  
disagreeable as a Russian resource in that kind  
enabled him to be. If you can manage it, as  
I shouldn't wonder, it would be a great help; for till  
my books are out I am quite strapper. In fact, there  
is hardly enough food to keep body & soul together &  
I am considerably weakened by it. I don't suppose  
this state of things will last very long; but it don't  
take very long to finish a man.

very truly  
C. D. Fine