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"Herbert Spencer Defended /editorial/,"
The New York Times, vol. 39 (Sunday, 30 March),
page 4, column 4.

HERBERT SPENCER DEFENDED.

The discussion concerning the "pretensions" of Mr. HERBERT SPENCER and the soundness of his Synthetic Philosophy is sustained and carried on in a most spirited way in the three replies to "Outsider's" attack which we print upon the thirteenth page of THE TIMES to-day. The article we printed last Sunday, in which "Outsider" boldly challenged the whole body of believers in Mr. SPENCER'S system to come forward and justify their faith, has evidently aroused the synthetic philosophers. One of them writes to us that "Spencerians are walking around the very large gauntlet thrown into the arena by 'Outsider,' and looking at it as an object of marked interest." They do not content themselves with walking around it, however. It has been picked up and hurled as a new defiance, straight at the head of "Outsider."

Of the many contributions we have thus far received in response to "Outsider's" challenge and our invitation to a discussion of the merits and validity of Mr. SPENCER'S philosophy, it happens that not one is in support of "Outsider's" position. All are from ardent Spencerians, and the three articles we print to-day, fairly represent the tone and temper of the others, the publication of which we are obliged to defer until next Sunday. The contributions of "Kappa," of "R. G. E.," and of Prof. MESSENGER will be read with interest and instruction by students of SPENCER, whether they accept or reject his doctrines. It is extremely gratifying to receive and print contributions to this debate of such marked ability and so evidently based upon a clear understanding of the Synthetic Philosophy. They serve to supply the answer to the question we raised last week as to the tendency of thought and belief in respect to SPENCER'S system among scientists and students. It is gratifying, moreover, to the conductors of a newspaper to have this unmistakable assurance that there are persons in this busy community who, amid the demands of their daily vocations, and after the interests of baseball and the iniquities of the Sheriff's office have been duly attended to, have time and the inclination to give some thought to a subject like HERBERT SPENCER'S theory of the Universe. One of the communications we print this morning comes from a lawyer, another is from a physician, the third is from a mathematician. Other ones we have received come from men in still other walks of life -- scientists, journalists, students, &c. This is an evidence, we think, of widespread interest in the Synthetic Philosophy, and that it will be discussed in our columns from many points of view.

We renew our invitation to the champions, pro and con, to join in this discussion. We want to know what THE TIMES'S readers think of HERBERT SPENCER. We desire particularly that theologians who have studied his works shall give us and our readers the benefit of their reflections and conclusions, and inasmuch as many clergymen do not read Sunday newspapers, and might be unwilling to write for publication on that day, we will publish upon some other day than Sunday any communications whose writers may express that preference. We trust that the opponents of SPENCER will not leave "Outsider" single-handed to battle against the synthetic hosts. He is likely to be overwhelmed by numbers at least, if not in argument.

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