

[From *The Times*, February 4, 1892]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—I beg leave to assure my courteous critic, Canon Girdlestone, that . . .

Mr. Anderson, on the contrary, broadly affirms that “‘reh-mes’ is never used in the Bible to denote reptiles.” But he produces no evidence in proof of this somewhat rash assertion. The fact that Genesis ix., 3, sanctions the use of “reh-mes” for food proves nothing more than that the writer of the passage considered that Noah and his family were not bound by all the obligations of the Levitical law.

It would be more to the purpose if Mr. Anderson could produce an example of any Levitically clean animal to which the term “reh-mes” is applied. Still better if he would undertake to prove that when, in the first book of Kings, the wisdom of Solomon is celebrated, and he is said to have spoken of “reh-mes” (creeping things, R.V.), this term includes none but animals which, according to the Levitical law, might be eaten. Further, if the “reh-mes” (R.V., creeping things) which came out of the Ark were all Levitically clean animals, will Mr. Anderson be so good as to tell us under what head we are to range the swarm of pairs of terrestrial reptiles and other land “sheh-retz” which certainly must have been saved in that capacious vessel?

Mr. Anderson speaks with fondness of a peculiar exegesis “which philology takes no account of” and which, in return, I suppose takes no account of philology and as little of science. It may be that he has reached his surprising conclusions by the help of this *organon*; but I do not think that he will get persons who “take account” of either philology, science, or common sense to follow him.

For the present, then, Sir, I stand by my poor Sunday-school exegesis. I hold that “reh-mes” covers the same land animals as those denoted by “sheh-retz,” and that my argument from Leviticus, though superfluous, is valid. With many regrets for