

TO THE EDITOR:

The issue of THE JOURNAL for April-June 1953 contains a letter from Dr. Reidar Melsom in which it is said, at least by inference, that Dr. Armauer Hansen strove to change the name of *the ailment* in Norway from "Spedalskhet" to "lepra." The statement is literally true, but it is a truth which is apt to be seriously misinterpreted!

The Bible, as translated into Norwegian, has the word "Spedalskhet" where we have the word "leprosy." Hansen wished to avoid confusion between the ailment which he had so precisely defined and the condition described in the Bible. The confusion with the Bible is, therefore, the reason why he wished to have the official name in Norway changed to "lepra," exactly as confusion with the Bible causes us to wish the name of the modern ailment changed to some other name than "leprosy." To one who does not know Norwegian the communication referred to, although correct, might give a very misleading impression.

University of Illinois
Chicago 12, Illinois

FREDERICK C. LENDRUM, M.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine