

[1966. *Movies and Morals. Christianity Today* 2 Sep.]

## MOVIES AND MORALS

J. Melville White's essay, "The Motion Picture: Friend or Foe?" (July 22 issue) is excellent. He unmasks the stupidity or hypocrisy of arguing that because many movies are bad, a Christian should see none, when even the pietists dare not argue that because many magazines are obscene, the Christian should read none.

Note also the falsity of two quoted assertions, to the effect that evangelicals do not attend the movies. The Evangelical Lutherans, the world's largest evangelical group, have never supported these pietistic restrictions.

Adding to God's commandments has been a frequent American arrogance. Finney, if I remember correctly, made it a sin to drink tea or coffee; certainly the Mormons inflict this prohibition and also insist that people should eat "very little meat."

To refuse to go to the movies is to deprive oneself of seeing *War and Peace*, *Hamlet*, and, less ponderously, *Treasure Island*. But what is worse, to refuse on religious grounds to go to the movies is to bring the cause of Christ into ill repute. After reasonable people are told that we should never see a movie, and never read a magazine, they lose all interest in hearing the rest of the gospel. GORDON H. CLARK Butler University Prof. of Philosophy Indianapolis, Ind.