

rounds of London, ringing his bell and crying, "No Christmas! No Christmas!"

This well-intentioned but misguided law put a damper on Christmas observance that lasted nearly two hundred years!

By the Victorian Age, there were still more solemn faces than joyous ones on Christmas Day. This distressed the great novelist, Charles Dickens, who saw the Christmas season as a time for warmth and joy and good will. Finally he was inspired to capture that spirit of the season in a single story that would show that Christmas is a time for the sharing of happiness, the opening of men's hearts, and the giving of charitable gifts, in response to God's great gift of the Lord Jesus. That story, which has become famous the world over, is A Christmas Carol. It is believed that that story did more to change the attitude of the English people toward Christmas than any other factor.

Although omission of the traditional elements because they tend to obscure the biblical elements is an answer to the problem, I do not believe it is the best answer, and certainly not the most practical answer in view of the heavy emphasis on the traditional elements in the culture in which we live.

- C. A third answer is that we should affirm the biblical elements, and transform the traditional elements into symbols of the true meaning of Christmas.

In an article in the December 20, 1968 issue of Christianity Today, John Warwick Montgomery writes:

Seen in this light, as the fulfillment of the deepest longings men have brought to expression in their myths, the Christmas story is not to be set over against the traditional lore of the Christmas season. Indeed, that lore, when properly understood, will reinforce and heighten the truth of the Incarnation itself. The traditional carols will be listened to more closely, and even the most "secular" will yield the eternal message . . .

The Christmas tree will inevitably and properly suggest the One who grew to manhood to "bear our sins in his body on the tree,, that