**“Official Religion. ‘Converted by Mistake’” American Sentinel 12, 34.**

E. J. Waggoner

**“Present Truth.” (London, Eng.)**

It is well known that the larger part of the population of Europe that turned from their native paganism to the papal church in early times were converted in the mass; that is, the chief of the tribe, for political or other reasons, cast in his lot with the imperial religion, and his people followed him in religion as they followed him in war. This notion of religion, which left no place for a change of heart and life, was thoroughly papal and has always been the religion of the natural man. It was against this religion of lifeless form that the Protestant Reformation lifted the standard, calling men to personal faith and to the new birth by the incorruptible word. To the survival of that old idea of religion is due the crusade in all Christendom for religion and morality by politics and religious legislation. Men whose religion is but a cloak easily conceive the idea of forcing others to wear the same cut of garment. {AMS September 2, 1897, p. 532.1}

*Apropos* of this subject of official religion, the *Echo* has recently reminded us that a Tartar tribe in Russia was last century “converted” to Mohammedanism by an official’s blunder:- {AMS September 2, 1897, p. 532.2}

“They were converted by mistake-by a slip of the pen-in a fit of absence of mind. Up till then the Kirghiz Tartars were Shamanites-worshippers of nature, spirits, and ancestral ghosts, as all the Central Asiatic tribes were before the advent of Mohammedanism, as some of them in obscure regions still are. In communication with the Kirghiz chief, he was addressed as Mohammedan by the Russian Minister. His tribe was supposed to be Islamic, and was officially described as such. After a time the St. Petersburg officials discovered that they had made a mistake. ‘You might have made Christians of them, once you were about it,’ exclaimed the Head of the Orthodox faith. They might. But there the Mohammedan designation was in the official records of the Empire, and Mohammedans the Kirghiz had to be, willy nilly. {AMS September 2, 1897, p. 532.3}

“The spectacle presented by a Christian State persuading a nation to embrace Islamism was curious. Of course, there was no compulsion. The Kirghiz Khan, being a polite man, made no bother about the affair. He became a passable Mohammedan. And of course, his tribe gradually followed his example. They are not very strict Mohammedans. Much of their old Shamanic faith still survives. {AMS September 2, 1897, p. 533.1}

“A still more curious example of chance in religious acceptance is that of Russia herself. When Vladimir sent envoys abroad-to Byzantium, among other places-in search of a new religion for his subjects, he was induced to become a Christian because of the splendor and the riches of the Christian capital. God must have specially favored a State so opulent, he argued. So his heathen Muscovites were officially informed that Christians they must become. But there was another Mohammedanism which was then competing with Christianity. But abstention from strong drink was one of its commands. It is historically known that this was the Russian peasants’ objection to embracing the prophet’s faith, then triumphant in Central Asia and Asia Minor.” {AMS September 2, 1897, p. 533.2}

**“Divine and Human” American Sentinel 12, 38.**

E. J. Waggoner

The demand for Sunday laws illustrates just the difference between the Sabbath and Sunday. Sunday was made a rest day by human authority, and human authority is resorted to in order to make men keep it. The Sabbath of the Lord is the Lord’s day, made the day of Sabbath rest by Divine authority. {AMS September 30, 1897, p. 598.1}

The Word maintains the Sabbath, and all the powers of earth cannot overthrow it. Of Sunday it is freely said that it is endangered if not protected by human law. {AMS September 30, 1897, p. 598.2}

Religious people testify in court that they are, disturbed if thy see some one working on Sunday, especially if he keeps the Sabbath; while one who keeps the Sabbath may enjoy perfect Sabbath rest in the Lord with all the world at work. {AMS September 30, 1897, p. 598.3}

The difference is that, between purely human religion and Divine religion. One day is God’s appointed rest, and the power of the Gospel is sufficient to establish it in the hearts of all who desire it. The other day belongs to the Papacy by best right, and has to be enforced by papal methods. One is the sign of God’s power to save, the other of man’s assumed power to save himself. The Sabbath stands for justification by faith, the Sunday for justification by works. {AMS September 30, 1897, p. 598.4}