

JOHN CALVIN: QUINCENTENNIAL QUOTES

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ON ROME, ISLAM, FANATICISM AND LIBERALISM

“Muhammad and the Pope have this religious principle in common, that Scripture does not contain the perfection of doctrine, but that something higher has been revealed by the Spirit. The Anabaptists and Libertines have in our own day drawn their madness from the same ditch” (*Comment on John 14: 25*).

“This error [of additional revelation beyond Christ] is followed by another, no less intolerable; that having said goodbye to Christ’s law, as if His reign were ended, and He now nothing at all, they substitute the Spirit in His place. From this source have flowed the sacrileges of the Papacy and Muhammadanism. For although those antichrists are dissimilar in many respects they have a common starting point: that in the Gospel we are initiated into the true faith, but that the perfection of doctrine must be sought elsewhere, to perfect us completely. If Scripture is brought against the Pope, he denies that we should keep to it, since the Spirit has also now come and has lifted us above it by many additions. Muhammad proclaims that without his *Qur’an* men always remain children. Thus, by a false claim to the Spirit, the world has been bewitched to leave the simple purity of Christ. For as soon as the Spirit is severed from Christ’s Word the door is open to all sorts of craziness and impostures. Many fanatics have tried a similar method of deception in our own age. The written teaching seems to them to be of the letter. Therefore they were pleased to make up a new theology consisting of revelations” (*Comment on John 16: 14*).

“The Papists boast with professorial superciliousness that all their inventions are the oracles of the Spirit. Muhammad, too, asserts that he has drawn his dreams only from heaven. In olden times the Egyptians lied that the mad absurdities with which they bewitched themselves and others had been divinely revealed. But I reply that we have the Word of the Lord [the Holy Bible], which should be consulted first” (*Comment on 1 John 4: 6*).

“Those, therefore, who fully support the Pope wish to keep the filthy abominations that they have always practised right to the end. However, there are many others who wish to see a reformation take place to the end that they might mix together in one the Pope, Muhammad and Jesus Christ, so that we can no longer discern between them! It makes no difference to them, provided they can bring the whole world together in harmony. They do not have a scrap of reverence for God. This explains why everything is so muddled and confused in our day, hence the abomination known as liberalism has arisen. Because they could not find it in their hearts to agree with Popery in every point, they thought it would be better if they were to reach a compromise between all the extremes” (*Sermon on Galatians 2: 3-5*).

“And seeing that the Son of God is come, is it reasonable that men should put forth their own dreams and traditions, and that Jesus Christ should hold His peace? But the Popish religion tends to none other end, than to put Jesus Christ to silence. The Pope boasts himself to be His vicar. But however the case stands, he makes laws at his own pleasure: he makes new articles of faith: to be short, the [true] Gospel is but an aside, if we believe the Pope: and the traditions that he has devised are the full perfection of all ...

... For behold, they have not been ashamed to say, that the things which the Popes and their councils have decreed, and all their rituals, filth and pelting trash, (which yet notwithstanding are but devilish abominations to pervert the service of God) are the things which the Apostles could not bear, when Jesus Christ said to them, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (*Jn. 16: 12*). And what things be they? O they be the high mysteries which the Pope devised about the Gospel [the mass, purgatory, etc] ...

... Like as Muhammad says that his *Qur'an* is the sovereign wisdom: so says the Pope of his own decrees: For they be the two horns of Antichrist. Since it is so, do we not see that we cannot in anywise cleave to the Pope but by renouncing Jesus Christ. Then let us bear well in mind, that seeing it is God's will to exalt His only Son after that fashion: surely He will have us to look unto Him, and that all doctrine be referred unto Him, and do concern Him. So we must conclude that all who will speak in the Church, must utter nothing but that which they have learned in the school of this great Schoolmaster” (*Sermon on Deuteronomy 18: 9-15*).