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government there in the 1540s. While agreeing with most of the doctrines of Lutheranism, Calvin stressed the notion of predestination. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), Calvin's rigorously logical masterpiece, which systematically establishes and explains the Calvinist Christian theology. Here, he stresses the importance of justification by faith and calling—striving to live a good life doing that which one has been called upon by God to do—as evidence that one has already been elected by God for salvation.

CONSIDER: How Calvinism avoids the danger of passivity and resignation that might be implied in this conception of predestination; how these views compare with Luther's views on free will and good works; why this doctrine would be threatening to Catholicism.

The covenant of life is not preached equally to all, and among those to whom it is preached, does not always meet with the same reception. This diversity displays the unsearchable depth of the divine judgment, and is without doubt subordinate to God's purpose of eternal election. But if it is plainly owing to the mere pleasure of God that salvation is spontaneously offered to some, while others have no access to it, great and difficult questions immediately arise, questions which are inexplicable, when just views are not entertained concerning election and predestination. . . .

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death. . . .

We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment. In regard to the elect, we regard calling as the evidence of election, and justification as another symbol of its manifestation, until it is fully accomplished by the attainment of glory. But as the Lord seals his elect by calling and justification, so by excluding the reprobate either from the knowledge of his name or the sanctification of his Spirit, he by these marks in a manner discloses the judgment which awaits them. I will here omit many of the fictions which foolish men have devised to overthrow

Institutes of the Christian Religion: Predestination

John Calvin

Lutheranism was the dominant movement of the first decades of the Reformation. But by mid-century it had lost much of its dynamism and remained confined primarily to major portions of Germany and Scandinavia. Leadership of the expanding Protestant movement in other parts of Europe fell to John Calvin (1509–1564). Born in France and trained as a lawyer and Classical scholar in French universities, Calvin had an important religious experience and adopted many of Luther's doctrines. Because of his views, he fled France for Geneva in the 1530s, eventually establishing a theocratic

SOURCE: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. II, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh, Great Britain: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), pp. 529, 534, 540.

predestination. There is no need of refuting objections which the moment they are produced abundantly betray their hollowness. I will dwell only on those points which either form the subject of dispute among the learned, or may occasion any difficulty to the simple, or may be employed by impiety as specious pretexts for assailing the justice of God.