

## Preface to the electronic edition

This edition of Jacob Boehme's text on the **Election of Grace**, or *Von der Gnaden-Wahl*, was conceived by me to assure that an indexed version of this important text would be available on the internet. After all, what you can't find on the net, has a relatively low profile in today's world. I have left out the laborious preface of the translator/editor as well as the numerous notes of his referring to the scriptures, since these notes were poorly scanned. Some notes have been retained however. For those who want to trace these notes, I refer to scanned versions of the Election, also available on [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com) as well as to the edition of Kessinger publications.

As to the word "predestination" occurring in the title, I would like to remark that this does *not* refer to what is commonly called *fate*. The latter word refers to what happens to the personality, the outer human being, the "shell", rather than the spiritual part of the human person.

I do not think that Jacob Boehme would like to promote a belief in passive attitude, people seeing themselves as victims of blind fate.

Rather, he expounds the *choice* human beings have in following the divine spirit within, or "God", as he calls this Being.

The author's preface and the appendix "concerning repentance" makes this clear as well.

Jacob Boehme regards the Election of Grace as one of his clearest books. This makes it even more imperative that it is available in text form on the internet. The spelling of the words, esp. nouns and adjectives has been retained as much as possible. For example, "beastial" has not been replaced by "bestial", since the latter has another connotation than the former, which refers to the animal part in the human frame. Some comments have been interspersed by me in [].

Rest me to wish you a profitable study of this great work.

Martin Euser  
[meuser.awardspace.com](http://meuser.awardspace.com)  
[www.tripod.com/m\\_euser](http://www.tripod.com/m_euser)

OF THE  
ELECTION  
OF GRACE;  
OR  
OF GOD'S WILL TOWARDS MAN,  
COMMONLY CALLED,  
PREDESTINATION.

It shows how the Texts of Scripture are to be understood which treat  
of

Fallen lost Adam, and of the New Birth  
from Christ:

BEING

A short Declaration and Introduction concerning the highest  
Ground, showing how Man may attain Divine Skill and Knowledge.

By JACOB BEHMEN (Boehme) , the Teutonic Theosopher

THE  
CONTENTS  
OF  
THE BOOK.

*THE Author's Preface by Way of Introduction*

CHAP. I

*What the One only God is.*

CHAP. II

*Concerning the Origin of God's Eternal Speaking Word; and of the Manifestation or Revelation of the Divine Power, also concerning Nature and Property, or particular Individuality of Things.*

CHAP. III.

*Of the introducing of the fiery Science, or Root into Forms or Qualities, and Dispositions, to the producing of Nature, and to the producing of Being, Essence, or Substance: How the Science or Root brings itself into Fire, how all this is to be understood, and how Multiplicity arises; the Gates of the Great Mystery of all hidden Secrets.*

CHAP. IV.

*Of the Origin of the Creation.*

CHAP. V.

*Of the Origin of Man.*

CHAP. VI.

*Of the Fall of Man and of his Wife.*

C H A P . VII.

*Of the bestial Manifestation in Man: How Adam and Eve's Eyes were opened; and how this is to be understood in the Ground of it.*

C H A P . VIII.

*Of the Sayings of Scripture, how they oppose one another; how Men should understand them; also of the Tree of Life of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. At the 54th Verse of this Chapter begins the treating of God's Purpose or Predestination.*

CHAP. IX.

*Of the Opposition of the Sayings of Scripture ; clearing the right Understanding of the Scripture.*

C H A P . X.

*A summary Collection of the Objections from Scripture, which Objections hold Reason captive; and how they are to be understood.*

C H A P . XI.

*A farther Comparing and Explanation of the Sayings concerning Election.*

C H A P . XII.

*A short Instruction concerning some Questions, which make Reason to err, supposing God hardens Man from a special determinate purposed Will; and how this is to be understood.*

C H A P . XIII.

*A summary Conclusion upon all these Questions.*

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

*WHEN Reason hears any thing said concerning God intimating what he is according to his Being, Essence, Substance and Will, it imagines in itself as if God were some strange thing afar off, dwelling without and beyond the Place of this World, aloft above the Stars, and governed only by his Spirit with an omnipotent Power in the Place of this World.*

*2. But it supposes that his Majesty in Trinity, wherein God is especially manifest dwells in Heaven, without and beyond the Place of this World.*

*3. And thereupon Reason falls into a creaturely Opinion, as if God were some strange thing, and that he did before the Time of the Creation of the Creatures and of this World hold a Consultation in himself in his Trinity, by his Wisdom, to contrive what he would make, and to what End every thing should serve, and so has framed a predestinate Purpose in himself, what he would ordain every thing to be.*

*4. Whence the contentious Opinion is risen, of God's Determination concerning Man, as if God had in his Purpose or Predestination chosen one Part of Men for Heaven, to be in his holy Habitation, and appointed the other Part to eternal Damnation, in whom he will manifest his Wrath; and that contrariwise in the other which are his chosen and elect he will manifest his Grace.*

*5. And so it is thought he has in his Predestination made a Separation, that he might show his Power both in Love and Anger: And therefore every thing must of Necessity be as it is.*

*6. That Part ordained to Wrath it is conceived are so reprobated and hardened by God's Purpose and Predestination, that there is no Possibility left for them to attain the Salvation of God, and on the contrary in the other there is no Possibility of Damnation.*

*7. And though the Holy Scripture speaks almost the very same Words, to which creaturely Reason assents, which understands not at all what God is; yet Scripture, on the other Side, speaks*

*much more to the contrary , that God wills not Evil, nor has purposely by way of Predestination made any thing that is evil.*

*8. Both those Contraries, how they are to be understood each of them in its own Ground, we will give to the Christian impartial Readers, the Seekers and Lovers of the Ground and of the Truth, to unite and reconcile them, and establish the true Understanding: I say, we will give them a short Explanation to consider of, and present our Gift or Talents (as it is apprehended and laid hold on in the Grace of the highest Good) for them to examine with a good Intention.*

*9. Not meaning thereby to contend against, or despise any for their conceived Opinion, but for a Christian and brotherly conjoining and uniting of our Gifts which we have, bestowed upon any of us from the Divine Grace.*

*10. The Branches and Twigs of a Tree appear not in all things like in Form, and yet stand in one and the same Stock, and one gives and introduces Entity and Virtue into the other, and all flourish and rejoice, blossom and bear Fruit in one Stock, there being no Grudging and Dislike of their Strength and Dissimilitude; but each Branch labours to bring forth its Fruit and Harvest.*

*11. So it may also well be with our unlike differing Gifts, if we introduce our Desire into the right true Mother, as into our Stock, and each Branch of the Tree afford, the other its Virtue in good Will.*

*12. We must not bring ourselves into Selfishness, and into our own Lust of Self-Love, as going forth in Pride, willing to be above our Mother in whom we stand, and above all her Children, and be a Tree of our own.*

*13. Neither are we to receive into us the Devil's Poison and Venom or Infection of Self, and false or wicked magnetic Impression, whence Strife and Opposition, also Rents and Schisms and Divisions arise, so that one Twig of the human Tree rends and separates itself from the other, and affords them not his Ens or Being and Virtue, and exclaims against them for schismatical, sectarian, apostate, false and wicked.*

14. *It sets itself, and is known as a broken separated Twig before its Brother in a false Lustre or Shew: Whence the Multitude of Contentions among Men have risen.*

15. *Of all which we will signify what the Original of Contention is, and from whence Opinions and Divisions naturally arise, we will also signify what the true Ground of the only Religion is.*

16. *And we will show from whence the Opposition from the Beginning of the World to this Time has proceeded, for the better understanding of the Divine Will, both according to Love and Anger; and how it is all fundamentally to be understood.*

17. *And we admonish the loving Reader to immerse himself in Divine Humility into God and his fellow Branch or Brother; and so he may read and conceive our received deep Sense and Apprehension, and be brought from all Error into the true Rest, wherein all things rest in the Word and Power of God. And we commend him into the working Love in the Ens or Being of Christ, and our well intended Will and Desire into his.*

A M E N.

## The first Chapter.

*Of the sole Will of God, and of the introducing his Substance of Revelation, or bringing it into manifestation, and what the One Only God is.*

1. God says in *Moses*, in a manifested revealed open Voice, to the People of *Israel* (among whom he introduced himself from his *hidden Secresy* in a manifest Sound after a *formed* creaturely Manner, and caused them to hear, that the Creature might apprehend him) saying, *I the Lord thy God am but one only God; thou shall honour no other Gods besides me.*

2. Also *Moses* says, *The Lord our God is an angry and jealous God, and a consuming Fire; and in another Place, God is a merciful God. Also his Sprit is a Flame of Love.*

3. These seem to be contrary, in that he calls himself an angry God and a consuming Fire; and then also a Flame of Love, which can be nothing but only *Good*, otherwise he were not God, *viz.* the only Good.

4. For Men cannot say of God, that he is this or that Evil or Good, which has *Distinction* in itself, for he is himself without, or beyond Nature and Creature, and without creaturely Affections.

5. He has no Inclination to any Thing, for there is nothing *before him* to which he should incline, neither any Evil or Good.

6. He is himself the *Abyss*, without any Will at all: In respect of Nature and Creature he is as an eternal Nothing: There is *no* Passion or Pain in him, nor any Thing that can either tend to him, or deviate from him.

7. He is the one only Being, Essence, or Substance, and there is nothing either before him or after him, of which or *wherein* he could form or grasp a Will to himself.

8. He has also nothing that can *generate* him, or give to him: He is the *Nothing and All-things*, and is one only Will, in which lie the World and the whole Creation.

9. *In him* all is alike eternal, without Beginning, equal in Weight, Measure, and Limit: He is neither Light nor Darkness, neither Love nor Anger, but is the eternal ONE: Therefore says *Moses*; *The Lord is one only God.*

10. This unsearchable, inconceivable Will without Nature which is only one, having nothing before it, nor after it, which in itself is but one, which is as nothing, and yet all Things; this is, and is called the one only God, which conceives and finds himself in himself, and generates God of God.

(*What the One Only God is.* Chap. 1.)

11. Thus the *first* only Will without Beginning, which is neither Evil nor Good, *generates in itself* the only eternal Good, as a comprehensible Will, which is the Son of the abyssal bottomless Will, and yet is equally eternal in the unbeginning *Will.*

12. And that *second* Will is the first Will's eternal Perception and finding, wherein the Nothing finds itself to be Something in itself.

13. And the unsearchable, *viz.* the bottomless Will, goes forth through its eternal Sound, or invented Will, and brings itself into an eternal *Visibility* of itself.

14. Thus the *bottomless* Will is called the Eternal FATHER.

15. And the conceived Will of the Abyss is called his generated begotten or innate SON; for it is the ENS or Being of the Abyss, in which the Abyss conceives itself in a Ground or Foundation.

16. And the *Exit* of the bottomless Will, through the conceived *Ens* or Being or Son, is called SPIRIT; for it drives the conceived *Ens* or Being forth from itself, into moving or *Life* of the Will; as a Life of the Father and the Son.

17. And that which is gone forth is the Longing or *Delight*, *viz.* that which is found by the Eternal Nothing, wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or the Deity finds and beholds itself, and it is called God's *Wisdom* or *Visibility.*

18. This threefold Being, Essence or Substance in its Birth, in

the Visibility of itself in the Wisdom, has been *ever* from Eternity, and possesses in itself no other Ground or Place but *only itself*.

19. It is one only Life, and one only Will, without *Desire*, and is neither thick nor thin, neither high nor deep: It is neither Space, Time, nor Place, neither does it possess in itself either thick or thin, high or deep, Space or Time, but is through all and in all, and yet is to all as an *incomprehensible* Nothing.

20. As the Influence of the Sun works in the whole World, in all Things, and through all Things, and yet that all cannot take any thing of the Sun, but must be his *Patient*, and operate with the Virtue and Power of the Sun, in such a Manner is God to be considered as what he is, *without* Nature and Creature in himself, in a Self-comprehensible *Chaos*, without Ground, Time, and Place.

21. Wherein the Eternal Nothing comprehends itself in an *Eye*, or Eternal Seeing, for its Self-Visibility, Perceptibility, and Capacity of being found.

22. Whereupon Man *cannot say* that God has *two* Wills, the one to Evil, the other to Good.

23. For in the creatureless Deity, without Nature, there is no more but *one* only Will, which is also called the *one* only *God*.

24. Who also in himself wills no more but only to find and comprehend himself, and to go forth *from* himself, and so with the Exit *introduce* himself into a Visibility.

25. Wherein Men may understand the Trinity of the Deity together with the Glass of his Wisdom, as the *Eye* of his Vision, or Intuition.

26. Wherein all Powers and Virtues, Colours, Wonders, and Beings in that one only Wisdom, in equal Weight and Measure without Properties, are understood, as *one* only *Ground* of the Being of all Beings.

27. A Delight or Longing found in himself to *Something*: A Delight or Longing to the Manifestation, Revelation, or finding

of Properties.

28. Which Delight, Longing, or Wisdom in itself, in the first Ground, is yet wholly *without* Properties: For if there were Properties, then there must be also something that affords or causes distinguishing Properties.

29. But now there is *no Cause* to the producing the Divine Delight, Longing, or Wisdom, but barely and only the one only Will, *viz.* the one only God; which himself introduces himself into a Trinity, *viz.* into a *Comprehensibility* of himself.

30. Which Comprehensibility is the *Centre*; *viz.* the Eternal comprehended ONE, and is called the Heart or Seat of the Eternal Will *of God*, wherein the Abyss possesses itself in a Ground, which is the sole and only Place and Seat of God.

31. And yet in no Possibility of Partition, Separability, or Distinction; it is also totally unmeasurable, without any Form or Similitude, for there is nothing before it that can be likened with it.

32. This Heart or Centre of the Abyss is the Eternal *Mind*, *viz.* of the Will, and yet has nothing before it, that it can will, but only the one only Will that comprehends itself in this Centre: The first Will to the Centre, has also nothing that it can will, but alone this one only Place or Seat of its Capability of finding itself.

33. Thus the first Will is the Father of its Heart, or the Place of its finding, and a *Possessor* of that which is found, *viz.* of its innate or only begotten Will or Son.

34. The bottomless unfathomable Will, which is the Father and Beginning of all Beings, *generates* in itself a Place of Comprehensibility, or, as may be said, *possesses* the Place; and the Place is the Ground and Beginning of every Being, and *repossesses* the unfathomable Will again, which is the Father of Beginning to be a Ground.

35. Thus is the Father and his Son, *viz.* the Place to *Self-hood*, one only God, having one only Will.

36. Which one only Will in the comprehended Place of the Ground or Foundation, goes forth out of itself, out of the Comprehension; wherein with its *Exit* it is called a Spirit.

37. And the one only Will of the Abyss divides itself with the first eternal unbeginning Comprehension into a *threefold Operation*, and yet continues but *one Will*; viz. the *first Will*, which is called Father, operates or generates in it the Son, viz. the Place or Seat of the Deity.

38. And the Place or Seat of the Deity, which is the Father's Son, operates in itself in the Perceptibility the Powers and Virtues of the Wisdom, all which Powers arise in the Son.

39. And yet here all Powers are but one only Power, and that is the perceptible inventible *Deity* in itself, in its own Will and Being, without any Separability or Distinction.

40. These found, generated, effected or operated Powers, as the *Centre* of the Beginning of all Beings, the first Will, which is called Father, breathes forth in the Perceptibility of itself out of the *one only Power*, which is his Seat or Son out from itself, after that Manner as the Sun-Beams shed themselves forth out of the *magick Fire* of the Sun, and manifest the Power, Virtue, or Influence of the Sun.

41. And so that *Exit* is a *Beam* of the Power of God, as a moving Life of the Deity; wherein the unfathomable Will has brought itself into a Ground or Foundation, as into a Power of willing [stirring], and that *breathes forth* the Will to the Power, out from the Power.

42. And the *Exit* is called the Spirit of God, which makes the third Operation or *Effect*, viz. the Life or stirring in the Power.

43. The fourth Operation now is performed in the out-breathed Powers, viz. in the Divine Visibility [intuition] or *Wisdom*, wherein the Spirit of God, which rises out of the Powers with the out-breathed Powers, as with one only Power, plays with itself.

44. Where it introduces itself in the Powers, into *Formations* in the Divine Delight and Longing; as if it would introduce an

*Image of this generating to the Trinity into a several distinct Will and Life, as a Modelling of the one only Trinity.*



45. And that imprinted Image is the *Delight* or Longing of the Divine Visibility; and yet a Man must not here understand a comprehensible creaturely Image that may be circumscribed; but the Divine *Imagination*, viz. the first Ground or Foundation of the *Magia* [Magic], out of which the Creation has taken its Beginning and Original.

46. Also in that *Imprinting* of the *magic* Comprehension in the Wisdom, is understood the angelical and soulish [psychic] true *Image* of God, where *Moses* says, *God created Man in his Image*, that is, in the Image of this Divine *Impression* according to the Spirit, *and in the Image of God created he him*, as to the Creature, of the created corporeal Imagibility, or figure.

47. So also it is to be understood of the Angels, according to the Divine Being Out of the Divine Wisdom, but the *creaturely* Ground and Foundation shall hereafter be signified, wherein the Properties lie.

48. In this forementioned Recital, we understand very briefly and summarily, what God is, without and *beyond* Nature and Creature, where *Moses* says, *I the Lord thy God am one only God*.

49 . Whose Name in the sensual or sensitive Tongue, wherein this Divine Generating in the Powers of the only Wisdom introduces itself into a Comprehension of an *Image* of itself, is called JEHOVAH, as an imprinted Delight or Longing of the Nothing into something, or the Eternal ONE.

50. Which  in a Manner might be deciphered with such an Image or  Figure , and yet it is not a *measured* or divided Image or Substance ; but this is for the Mind to consider of.

51. For this *Imprinting* in itself is neither great nor small, and has no where any Beginning or End , but only that the Divine Delight or Longing *introduces* itself into a Substance of its Visibility, as into *Creation*.

52. Yet in itself the Imaging or Figuration is *endless*, and the Formation not circumscriptive, as the Modelling in *Man's Mind* immeasurably stands perpetually in a continual Form, wherein innumerable Thoughts may model and conceive or frame themselves in one only Mind, which yet in the earthly Creature arise for the most part from the Fancy of the *starry Mind* [zodiacal influences ;esp. planetary], and not from the Powers of the inward Ground of the Divine Wisdom.

53. Here we will intimate to the Reader, that God in himself, so far as he is called God, without and beyond Nature and Creature, has *no more than one* only Will, which is to give forth, and generate himself.

54. God JEHOVAH generates nothing but God, that is, he generates only *himself*, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the one only Divine Power and Wisdom.

55. As the Sun has but one only Will, which is, to give forth itself, and with its Desire in all things to press forth and grow, and to *bestow* Life, Power, and itself in all things; so in like Manner also is God without Nature and Creature the one only Good, that cannot give or will any thing but God or *Goodness*.

56. Without Nature and Creature he is the *greatest Meekness* and Humility, wherein is no Way, Footsteps or Prints possibly, either of any Will to good or evil Inclination; for there is neither Good nor Evil before him.

57. He is himself the Eternal only Good, and a Beginning of every good Thing [Being, Substance, Essence] or Will; neither is it possible that any Evil at all can penetrate into him, in as much as he himself is the one only Good; for he is all Things, and beyond him is nothing.

58. He is in himself an operative substantial Spiritual Power, the highest simplest Humility and *Well-doing*, also feeling Love, pleasing good Relish in the Sense, the sweet generating, well and delightful Hearing.

59. For there all Senses qualify and *operate* in equal Harmony and Agreement; and there is no other than an amiable Boiling or Springing of the Holy Spirit in the one only Wisdom.

60. Concerning which, a Man *cannot* say he is an angry God; neither that he is a merciful God; for in this, there is *no Cause* of Anger, nor any Cause of Love to any *at any* Thing, for he is himself the one only *Love*, which in meer Love generates himself, and introduces himself into *Trinity*.

61. For the first Will, which is called Father, loves its Son, *viz.* its Heart of its own Manifestation, because it is its *Perceptibility* and Power.

62. Even as the Soul loves the Body, so in like Manner does the comprehended Will of the Father love his Power, and *spiritual Body*, *viz.* the Centre of the Deity, or the Divine Somewhat, wherein the first Will is somewhat.

63. And the Son is the first Will's, *viz.* the Father's *Humility*, and desires again mightily the Father's Will; for without the Father he were nothing; and he is rightly called the Father's Longing or *Desire* to the Manifestation of the Powers, *viz.* of the Father's Taste, Smell, Hearing, his Feeling, and Seeing.

64. And yet a Man must not here understand any Division or Distinction; for all the Senses lie in *equal* Weight in the one only Deity; only consider, that these Senses, which arise in the Ground of Nature, exist, in that the Father speaks forth these Powers from himself into Separability or *Distinction*.

65. And the Holy Spirit is therefore called *Holy*, and the Flame of Love, because he is the out-going Power from the Father and the Son, *viz.* the moving *Life* in the first Will of the Father, and in the second Will of the Son in his Power, and because he is a *Framer*, Worker, and Driver on in the outgone Longing of the Father, and of the Son, *viz.* in the Wisdom.

66. Thus loving Brethren, ye poor Men confounded by *Babel*, which has *seduced* you through Satan's Envy, mark this: When Men tell you of three Persons of the Deity, and *of* the Divine Will, know *that the Lord our God is one Only God, that neither wills, nor can will Evil*.

67. For if he did will some Evil, and also did will some Good in himself, there were then a *Rent* and Division in him, and so there must be something that was the Cause of Contrariety.

68. But there being nothing *before* God, therefore there is nothing that can move him to any thing; for if any thing did move him, then were *that* before and greater than himself, and it would be, that God was at *odds*, and divided in himself, and then also that must be moveable from a *Beginning*, since it did move itself.

69. But we tell you, in or according to the Saying of the Only ONE, that the Being, Essence, or Substance of God, so far as he is called God, is understood to be *without* Ground, Place, and Time, dwelling in himself, and not to be considered as in any several *distinct* Place, with a separated Dwelling *apart*.

70. But wilt thou know where God dwells, take away Nature and Creature, and then God is *All*; take away the out-spoken formed Word, and then thou seest the Eternal *speaking Word*, which the Father speaks forth in the Son, and thou seest the hidden *Wisdom* of God.

71. But thou wilt say, I cannot take away Nature and Creature from me; for if that were done, I should be nothing, therefore I must thus represent the Deity by an Image or *Resemblance*, because I see that there is in me Evil and Good, and so also, it is to be understood in the whole Creature.

72. But hearken my Brother, God says in *Moses [Exod, 20]*, *Thou shalt make thee an Image of my God, neither in Heaven or upon the Earth, nor in the Water, nor in any Thing*, to signify that he is no Image, nor wants any Place to dwell in, neither should *Man* seek for him in any Place, but only in his formed outspoken or expressed Word, *viz.* in the Image of God in *Man himself*.

73. As it is written, *The Word is near thee, viz. in thy Mouth and Heart.* [Deut. 30:14]

74. And this is the right and nearest Way to God; for the *Image of God* to sink down in itself from all imprinted Images, and forsake all Images, Disputation, and Contention in itself and depart from Self-Will, Desire and *Opinion*, and immerse itself meerly and solely into the Eternal One, *viz.* into the clear *single Love of God*, trusting therein, which he has after the Fall of Man in Christ introduced into the *Humanity* again.

75. Thus I have therefore somewhat largely represented, that the Reader might learn to understand the right and first Ground, what God is, and wills and that he *seek* for no evil or good Will in the One only creatureless God, who is without Nature, also that he *go forth* from the Images of the Creature, when he will consider God, his Will and the Eternal speaking Word.

76. And when he will consider from whence Evil and Good proceed, *whence* God calls himself an angry, zealous, or jealous God, he must turn himself to the Eternal Nature, *viz.* to the outspoken or expressed compacted *formed Word*, and then to the Nature, *viz.* the *beginning temporal Nature*, wherein lies the Creation of this World.

77. Therefore now we will inform the Reader further concerning *God's Word*, which he expresses from his Powers, and show him, 1. The *Separation*, *viz.* the Original of Properties, whence a good and evil Will arise.

78. And 2. To what End this must be inevitably *so*.

79. And 3. How all things stand in such a *Condition*. And 4. How Evil arises in the Creature.