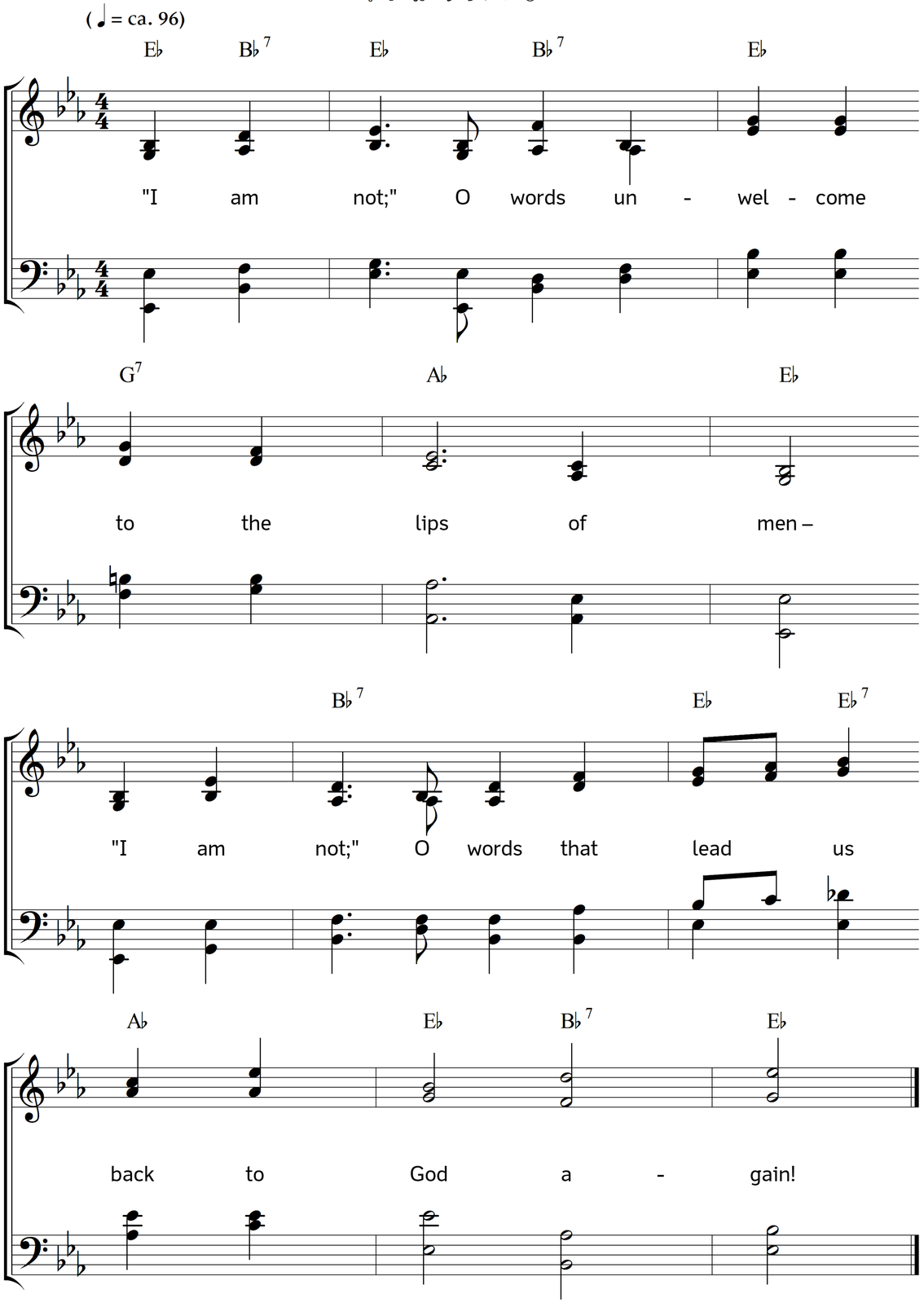
"I AM NOT"



2. Speech of him who knows the pathway
 to that refuge sweet,
where is covert from the tempest,
 shadow from the heat.

3. Speech of Heaven, from wise men hidden,
 unto children taught;
few the words of that great lesson,
 only "I am not."

4. Heart of man, another language
 is thy native speech,
spoken by a thousand races,
 all alike in each.

5. "I am, –" rich, or wise, or holy –
 "thus, and thus am I;"
for "I am," men live and labour,
 for "I am," they die.

6. For "I am," men dare and suffer,
 count all loss as gain,
toil and weariness and bondage,
 sin and grief and pain.

7. In the blessed Gospel read we
 how a rich man bade
Christ the Lord and his disciples
 to a feast he made.

8. Well it was to feed the prophet;
 thus the rich man thought,
but amidst his wealth and bounty
 lacked he "I am not."

9. Then there came a sinful woman,
 eyes with weeping dim –
"I am not," her heart was saying –
 she had looked on him.

10. He beheld her broken-hearted,
 ruined and undone,
yet enthroned above the angels
 brighter than the Sun.

11. All the while in dust before him
 did her heart adore,
"I am not," that song of gladness –
 "T h o u a r t, evermore."

12. For his heart to hers had spoken,
 to his wandering lamb;
in the speech of Love Eternal,
 H e had said "I AM."

13. Now she thirsts no more for ever,
 all she would is given;
none on earth hath she beside him,
 none beside in Heaven.

14. Oh how fair that heavenly portion,
 that eternal lot;
Christ, and Christ alone, for ever –
 ever "I am not."

Words: Frances Bevan (after Heinrich Suso). Music: Johannes Thomas Rüegg.
Copyright © 2013 Johannes Thomas Rüegg. Source: www.christmysong.com/886/