

O Savior, Open Heaven Wide

SATB, *A Cappella* or with Accompaniment
Advent

The text of this anthem is based on a poem *O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf*, written by the Jesuit priest Friedrich Spee von Langenfeld (1591-1635).

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* names Spee as “one of noblest and most attractive figures of the awful era of the Thirty Years’ War.” He is best known for his Latin tract *Cautio Criminalis*, printed in 1631 without the author’s name or permission. Spee’s tract condemns witchcraft trials, both for their horrible cruelty and for their legal corruption. The lyric here is my free paraphrase of verses 1, 2 and 4 of Spee’s original.

The tune used here was first joined with Spee’s verses in a German hymnal of 1666. The mode is Dorian, defined by the B-natural in the fifth full measure. I have harmonized the melody in a style more austere than romantic settings typical of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Albert Blackwell
February 2, 2012

O Savior, Open Heaven Wide

Friedrich von Spee (1662) alt.

O Heiland, reiss, German, 1625

arr. Albert Blackwell

1. O Sa - vior, o - pen heav - en wide, and once a -
2. Why dost thou tar - ry, God on high, on whom our
3. O bright - est sun, O clear - est star, O stead - fast

6 gain this Ad - vent - tide fling forth the por - tals, God, we
faith and hopes re - ly? Come thou and heav - en's grace be -
guide in heav'n a - far, now rise to greet our long - ing

12 pray, that shut our hearts from you to - day. -
stow; bring com - fort to our vale be - low. -
sight, lead us from dark - ness in - to light.

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