



This photo shows Josiah Alwood at a meeting of the Parent Board of Missions in 1894, in Charlotte, Mich. Some notable persons are seated in that front row. From the left: Charles Kiracofe was the first president of Huntington (Central) College. Millard Keiter, publishing agent, would soon become the center of a major controversy which lasted several years. J. K. Alwood wrote the hymn "The Unclouded Day." Horace Barnaby and Halleck Floyd both served as bishop 1889-1905. Henry J. Becker was bishop 1889-1893.

One day in 1879, United Brethren minister Josiah K. Alwood argued theology late into the night with a Seventh Day Adventist minister in the Ohio village of Spring Hill. Alwood, for the record, felt he won the debate. Around midnight, he climbed atop his horse for the eight-mile ride back to his home in Morenci, Mich. As he entered Morenci, he saw something unusual.

I saw a rainbow which was caused by the rays of the moon streaming against a shower of rain falling from a dark, dense cloud a short distance beyond the northwestern limits of our sleeping Morenci. The moon was low in the cloudless southeastern sky. It was a new sight to me; and you can scarcely imagine the feeling of solemn joy which came over me as I gazed upon the lovely segment of the bow of promise smiling on our quiet town.

As that description shows, Alwood had a poetic streak. The next morning, he awoke with the start of a song in his head. He spent the next two days composing the four verses.

Olin Alwood, who would become a bishop in 1905 and serve 16 years in that role, was just a child when his father wrote "The Unclouded Day." He recalled: "The extent of his ability as a musician was to drum a tune by ear with one finger on the very modest Estey organ the home afforded. This he proceeded to do to provide an air for his song. Soon we heard him singing some new strange strains and words as new. A new song had been made."

Some time later, an old acquaintance named J. F. Kinsey, who was a vocal music teacher, asked J. K. Alwood if he had any music to suggest. Josiah sang his song, and Kinsey asked for permission to arrange the hymn for publication.

Olin Alwood said they never received any money for the song, and there was even an attempt to discredit his father's authorship. "But I well remember seeing him writing the words and then drumming out the tune on the organ. We at home were the first who ever heard it sung."

Bishop Milton Wright wrote of J. K. Alwood upon his death in 1909, "Always stood for the right as he saw it. Always interesting in his preaching, but as often quite peculiar, for he was like no one else..."