

Source References

In this column please list, opposite each item, the source of your information: book, periodical, institutional church record (in each case give author, title, volume, page, date), letter, interview (give names, date), other source.

Arthur L. White
(Name of Writer)

FOY, WILLIAM ELLIS
(Name of Article)

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Of interest to Seventh-day Adventists because his name is occasionally mentioned as one who in 1842 and 1844 received divine revelations in connection with the Advent Movement.*

William Foy, a light-skinned mulatto, residing in New England, as a young man gave his heart to Christ in the year 1835. Some time thereafter he became a member of the Freewill Baptist Church and was preparing to

take holy orders as an Episcopal minister when in 1842, two visions were given him. Prior to the receiving of these visions, Foy, while deeply religious, was by his own testimony, "opposed to the doctrine of Jesus' near approach."

The visions relating to the near advent of Christ, and to last-day events created in him a very definite interest in the Advent Movement, and he joined others in heralding the message of the expectation of Christ's soon return.

The two initial visions of William Foy, together with a brief sketch of his Christian experience were in 1845 published in Portland, Maine, in a pamphlet. The first vision was given to him on January 18, 1842, while he was attending service in a Boston church on Southark Street. Eyewitnesses to the experience testify that he was in vision two hours and a half. A physician who examined him testified that he could find no appearance of life "except around the heart." In his autobiographical account, Foy declares, "My breath left me."

In the first revelation Foy viewed the glorious reward of the faithful and the punishment of sinners, etc. He felt the duty to declare what he had seen to others, but not being instructed to relate the vision, he disclosed it to no one. But he had no peace of mind. In a second revelation given to him on February 4, 1842, he viewed multitudes of earth,

*See also Foss, Hazen

By Experience, pp. 17, 5 D.F. 231

Great Second Advent Movement, 145

By Exp., 18

y Exp., 1

y Exp., 6

y Exp., 19

y Exp. 6

y Experience, 12

y Exper. 12, 13

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those who had not died and those who had been raised from the dead, being assembled to receive their reward. And in connection with this revelation, he was instructed, "Thou must reveal those things which thou hast seen, and also warn thy fellow creatures to flee from the wrath to come."

Foy Exp. 12-14

Foy's unwillingness to relate to others what had been shown to him stemmed from both the prejudice against any who claimed to have divine revelations, and the prejudice against those of his color. He questioned in his mind, "Why should these things be given to me to bear to the world?"

Foy Exp. p. 16

A few days later, the pastor of the Bloomfield Street church in Boston called upon Foy to relate the visions in his house of worship. Reluctantly, he consented and the next evening he found a large congregation assembled awaiting his message. As he began to speak, his fear left him and he related with great freedom the things which were shown to him, to a congregation which gave rapt attention.

Foy Exp. 17

Foy Exp. 17

With this as a beginning, he traveled for three months, delivering his messages to crowded houses of all denominations. He had a good command of language. As he described the heavenly world, the New Jerusalem and the compassionate love of Christ, and exhorted the unconverted to seek God, many responded to his entreaties. As his family needed support, Foy after three months in the field retired from public work to labor with his hands. He engaged in such work for three months, and then, feeling impelled to stand before the people, he again took up his public ministry, expecting soon to see his Saviour when He should come. When speaking he wore the clerical robes of the Episcopal clergy.

Great Second Advent Movement, p. 146

Foy Exp. 18

G. S. A. M., p. 146; D.F. 231

D.F. 231

Ellen Harmon, who resided in Portland, Maine, when but a girl heard Foy speak in Beethoven Hall of that city. According to J. N. Loughborough, near the time of the expectation in 1844, Foy was given a third vision in

G.S.A.M. pp. 146-147

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which were presented three platforms which he could not understand in the light of his belief in the imminent coming of Christ. In perplexity he ceased public work. Soon after this, Mr. Foy took sick and died.

Great Second Advent Movement, p. 146

While some might question the genuineness of William Foy's experience Loughborough felt that the "visions bore clear evidences of being the genuine manifestations of the Spirit of God," and Ellen White, who was somewhat acquainted with him and who in 1912 was interviewed concerning Foy, treated his experience as genuine.

.F. 231

Sources: "The Christian Experience of William E. Foy, together with the Two Visions he received in the Months of January and February, 1842. Portland. Published by J. and C. H. Pearson, 1845," in the White Estate Document File 231.

Loughborough, J. N., Great Second Advent Movement, pp. 145, 146, 147.

Ellen G. White Interview with D. E. Robinson, 1912, in Ellen G. White Estate Document File 231

