

## Meet Sam Page: Another Window on Early Pentecostal Holiness Spirituality<sup>1</sup>

### Daniel Woods

As we begin, I want to encourage you to see historians as essentially forward-looking people. We study the past, to be sure, but not to live there. While historians seek to tell true, interesting, and meaningful stories about the past, we tell them standing squarely in the present and with at least one eye fixed on the future.

For historians, primary sources—no matter how fragile or fragmentary—are our window on the past. Some windows are large and some small, some are clear and some almost impossible to see through. Those of us whose attention has been arrested by the early history of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church [IPHC] have enjoyed looking through large, clear windows, like the copious written records left by G. F. Taylor and J. H. King.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, we have begun to sense the value of peering through small and cloudy windows too, like those which opened up momentarily when a pioneer evangelist or a praying mother would send one riveting testimonial letter to *The Bridegroom's Messenger* or *The Advocate* before disappearing from their pages.<sup>3</sup> We are also beginning to look through the middle-sized but hard to find windows that open only when we painstakingly assemble the scattered written records left by figures whose names we have long known—like Daniel Awrey, Sarah Minerva Payne, and T. J. McIntosh—but whose actual lives have remained in the shadows because they did not have the time or inclination to write books (or their books have not survived).<sup>4</sup> G. B. Cashwell was in this category before Bishop Beacham pieced together his story and gave us a new vantage point on our early history.<sup>5</sup>

My task today is to recreate for you the texture and substance of early Pentecostal Holiness spirituality. And I want to do this by opening one of these middle-sized windows to you—by looking at the life of a man whose name most of us know because he was elected here one hundred years ago to serve as our first General Superintendent, but whose voice and passions have never made it into our written histories. I invite you to “Meet Sam Page: *Another Window on Early Pentecostal Holiness Spirituality*.”

We know the name Samuel Daniel Page today primarily because in the absence of J. H. King he was narrowly elected over Brother King by a vote of 19 to 17. Some here may know that he was

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally written for the Centennial Celebration of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church held in Falcon, North Carolina on January 31, 2011. In order to preserve the flavor of that event, I have chosen to publish “Meet Sam Page” substantially as I presented it that day, supplemented only by a few additional examples and citations.

<sup>2</sup> Since the presentation of this paper, full-length biographies of both Taylor and King have added greatly to our understanding of the early IPHC. See H. Stanley York, *George Floyd Taylor: The Life of an Early Southern Pentecostal Leader* (Xulon Press, 2013); and Tony Moon, *From Plowboy to Pentecostal Bishop: The Life of J.H. King* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, forthcoming in 2016).

<sup>3</sup> E.g., see Daniel Woods, “The Royal Telephone: Early Pentecostalism in the South and the Enthusiastic Practice of Prayer,” in Beth Barton Schweiger and Donald G. Mathews, eds. *Religion in the American South* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004), 125-152.

<sup>4</sup> For an example of piecing together soche a rifé, see Daniel Woods, “Failure and Success in the Ministry of T. J. McIntosh: The First Pentecostal Missionary to China,” *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, Vol. 12 (January 2003) <[www.pctii.org/cyberg/](http://www.pctii.org/cyberg/)>.

<sup>5</sup> Doug Beacham, *Azusa East: The Life and Times of G. B. Cashwell* (Franklin Springs GA: LifeSprings Resources, 2006).

also one of the trustees of the newly-merged Pentecostal Holiness Church, that in 1915 he was appointed to the first Pentecostal Holiness Missions Board, and that after serving one term two-year term as General Superintendent he served for eight years as Assistant General Superintendent—first to Brother Taylor and then to Brother King. Some may also know that prior to the merger Sam Page had long served the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church as an evangelist, trustee, Assistant General Superintendent, and Ruling Elder of North Carolina. A few may even know that before any of this Sam Page was instrumental in organizing the first North Carolina Holiness Association in 1896, a group that attracted A. B. Crumpler, the most noted holiness preacher in the state, to serve as its president. (Though to be fair I need to tell you that the very next year he helped blow that young organization apart by joining forces with the new Fire-Baptized movement that condemned Crumpler and anyone else who did not accept a “third blessing” of fiery power as “tame holiness devils.”)<sup>6</sup>

This is an impressive list of appointments and accomplishments, but to be honest, it reveals little about the man Sam Page except that his fellow ministers had confidence in him as a godly leader. As I looked closer at the historical record, though, I found that some of his co-laborers openly lamented his limitations and even one of his best friends described him as “gloriously unique.” Let me briefly share five facets of his ministry that sometimes drew criticism (or at least raised some eyebrows):

- Though Sam Page served at the highest leadership levels, he was not always conversant with the procedures of the *Discipline* and his motions at conference were sometimes (as his friend A. E. Robinson put it) “so ridiculous through improper wording” that his fellow ministers lobbied to have them omitted from the minutes to prevent embarrassment.<sup>7</sup>
- In another apparent anomaly, Brother Page was gifted at both making and raising money but often showed up to preach in a worn-out suit and with more watermelon seeds in his pockets than dollars. “I could wear better than this,” he once told Florence Goff, “but I want to help folks.” And help people he did, “Ma” Goff added, by giving his nice suits to preachers who had none, by putting many young ministers that he was mentoring through school, and even once by borrowing “a hundred dollars to help a poor preacher in distress.”<sup>8</sup>
- Some even questioned his commitment to sanctified living. Sam Page held the standards of “Bible holiness” as high as anyone—once condemning Sunday School picnics as “boisterous festivity” that would open the door to raffling cakes and selling oysters in the church—but he was also known as such a friend to wayward and defrocked

---

<sup>6</sup> The preceding summary of S. D. Page’s leadership positions is drawn primarily from Vinson Synan’s *Old-Time Power: A Centennial History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs GA; LifeSprings Resources, 1998) and a close reading of the following periodicals: *Way of Faith* (1895-1897), *Live Coals of Fire* (1899-1900), and *Live Coals* (1904-1907).

<sup>7</sup> “Reverend Samuel Daniel Page Memorial Issue” of the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* (December 6, 1934), 2. [Hereafter cited as “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*.]

<sup>8</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 10-11.

preachers that sometimes, A. E. Robison explained, he was “classed a friend of our enemies and unwanted in some of our pulpits.”<sup>9</sup>

- And although the primary identity of Sam Page throughout life was as holiness preacher (down to being buried in a white suit and having the words “I wish I’d been a better man” carved on his headstone) and though he also understood both “Fire-Baptized” and “Pentecostal” to be adjectives modifying the noun phrase “Holiness Church,” there were times when he ran so hard after Holy Ghost power that he caused concern among even his closest friends. A. E. Robison remembered that in 1899, when a Fire-Baptized leader announced that he had been given certain spiritual gifts, Brother Page followed him around for days studying his every move in hopes of being granted such powers to enhance his ministry. And in 1903, when he was Assistant General Superintendent of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, his close friend Sarah Payne, managing editor of *Live Coals*, refused to print his testimony of having received an explosive baptism of dynamite. She believed that he was describing an actual encounter with the Spirit of God, but she warned him that publishing such a letter based purely on experience and without clear scriptural support would endanger the movement by inviting “fanaticism” that could “be used of Satan to get some poor souls to look to manifestations and feelings rather than to God Himself.” Sarah Payne clearly loved and respected Brother Page, but she also had come to see that there was no baptism promised in God’s Word beyond being baptized with the “Holy Ghost and fire.”<sup>10</sup>
- Lastly, though Sam Page had probably won more souls to the Lord (judging by the testimonies in *The Advocate* and other early papers) than anyone present at the 1911 merger, some people openly pitied his inability to preach. Brother Page heard this last charge so often that he developed a stock answer: “I never said I was called to preach. I just said that Jesus saved me from hell and told me to go home and tell everyone what he had done for me!”<sup>11</sup>

A.E. Robison recounted this telling story: When Sam Page held a tent meeting, it was his habit to sleep in the tent at night and then to find a quiet place in the woods where he would lie on his face and pray for most of the day. Once, a couple of his fellow ministers were talking about Brother Page’s poor preaching as they strolled by his “secret place.” While most of us might have remained hidden until they had passed, Sam Page mildly rose to his feet from his place of prayer and said, “Well [brothers], I do the best I can.”<sup>12</sup>

Brother Robison used this story to illustrate Sam Page’s humility—that election to high office did not puff him up and the most hurtful criticism failed to elicit either anger or self-pity. Some

---

<sup>9</sup> “Picnics and Reunions,” *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, April 16, 1924, 5; “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 2; Sarah M. Payne to S. D. Page, unpublished correspondence, September 1, 1903, 6. Historians of early Pentecostalism have long assumed that the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church’s promotion of experiences beyond the “Baptism of Fire”—first receiving “heavenly dynamite,” then “lyddite,” “oxidite,” and “selenite”—dissipated soon after General Overseer B. H. Irwin’s moral failure became public knowledge in 1900, but Sarah Payne’s letter suggests that some Fire-Baptized leaders, including Sam Page and J. H. King, continued to believe in a “Baptism of Dynamite” at least as late as 1903.

<sup>11</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 2.

preachers are sanctified “in spots and streaks,” Robinson observed, but for over thirty-five years “I never saw anything manifested in [Sam Page] but a truly sanctified spirit.”<sup>13</sup> I see something else in this story of equal importance: the secret to his great success as an evangelist. Brother Page understood his calling apostolically. His burden was to plant Holy Ghost vineyards in places where the enemy’s crop of weeds had choked out all Gospel life. God had commissioned him to go to war with the devil in out-of-the-way communities that better-known evangelists would never visit. He was a warrior called to battle, not an entertainer. And he knew that his greatest weapon was not polished preaching but prevailing prayer.

Our earliest glimpses of Sam Page’s meetings come from reports to the *Way of Faith* in the mid-1890s, and from these we learn that each place he pitched his tent became a battleground. Here is a sampling of his reports:

- From Cool Springs, South Carolina: He and co-worker W. W. Avant had a battle there, but at least 75-100 had been saved, reclaimed, or sanctified. “The devil had his guns mounted and his forces marshaled; we obeyed the command, marched around the city, blew the ram’s horns and shouted; claimed the city on the promises of God and the walls came down. Inhabitants put to flight; the banner of victory unfurled with Holiness Unto the Lord.” In some services, the evangelists did not have the chance to preach because of the seekers crowding around the altar during the singing. Not all the victories occurred under the tent. Some were saved on the road and some at home.<sup>14</sup>
- From Forney, South Carolina: “No opposition, all churches united, and the spirit was poured out on them, and many of their sons and daughters prophesied.” One woman laughed and shouted for three days. Her husband grew so distressed “that she was going crazy that he sat up and cried half the night.” But before the meeting ended he became one of 38 converted. There were 24 sanctified. And five “hardened.”<sup>15</sup>
- From Purdy, North Carolina: “Greater power was demonstrated more than I ever saw it”: “over a hundred saved, sanctified, baptized with fire, and healed. Several went into trances.” Some tried to run away but were drawn into the tent “through the power of God . . . and entirely sanctified.”<sup>16</sup>

If Sam Page could not preach, then why were fifty, seventy-five, even one hundred people saved, sanctified, healed, or baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire nearly every place he set up his tent in these years? Rarely did he witness fewer than twenty-five experiences in his meetings. And when he did, he was not happy. For example, one week-long campaign in Gaddysville, North Carolina yielded only “seven converted, two sanctified, and one reclaimed. The meeting was not as good as it could have been,” Page reluctantly reported. “Not much opposition but lots of indifference.”<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> *Way of Faith*, November 6, 1895, 5; November 13, 1895, 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Way of Faith*, January 29, 1896, 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Way of Faith*, November 25, 1896, 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Way of Faith*, February 19, 1896, 4.

By the end of the decade, Sam Page had joined the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. Headed by B. H. Irwin, this radical new “third blessing” group met Brother Page’s longing for definite experiences of both a purifying sanctification and an empowering “baptism with fire” subsequent to salvation. Ever the warrior for Christ, Sam Page spread the Fire-Baptized message with the same zeal that characterized his early years as an independent holiness evangelist, taking an even harder stand against “worldly” activities, apparel, and associations. And he continued to attract opposition as he battled for the Lord. While preaching the more radical Fire-Baptized message may have resulted in a lower number of spiritual experiences in his meetings, Sam Page continued to see spectacular results with some of each community’s most hardened sinners and he rarely took down his tent until he had organized a fledgling Fire-Baptized congregation charged with the responsibility of gathering a harvest of souls in their community. Again a sampling of his reports, this time from Irwin’s *Live Coals of Fire*, allows us to see Sam Page in action:

- From Button, North Carolina: He led a team of six Fire-Baptized evangelists who helped win a “victory for the God of fire.” While he could only report that “several confessed and professed faith in Jesus,” one of them was a man who quite boisterously “said he did not want religion if he had to give up hog and tobacco.” Yet “before the meeting closed he found his way to the altar and there reconsidered, professed faith in Jesus, went home, burned two plugs and a piece of tobacco, his wife begging him to give it to her.” The man then took this pipe from the mantle and threw it “stem and all, into the fire.” This testimony led to other conversions and played a crucial role in allowing Sam Page to organize a Fire-Baptized Holiness Church in Button.<sup>18</sup>
- From Patetown, North Carolina: On a third trip to this “country place,” he was able to organize a “little praying fire-baptized band, and set the meeting time at half past three on Friday afternoons, purposely, so only those interested would come.” The first meeting drew only two people, but soon “they had to move the meeting into the yard—the house would not hold them.” People began “getting saved and straightening up their lives,” Brother Page reported. Enemies became friends, broken family relationships were mended, and neighbors began “paying back what they had robbed” from each other. Worldly things lost their appeal as worship became more passionate: “Lodges, feathers, coffee, and tobacco have been given up; shouting and praising God is the order of the day with the saints who will dare to make straight paths.”<sup>19</sup>
- From Brownsville, South Carolina: As his Fire-Baptized work continued, Sam Page reported less frequently on the numbers of converts, instead emphasizing the progress made in selling subscriptions to *Live Coals of Fire* and acquiring (or constructing) houses of worship for the new Fire-Baptized congregations. Even more, he concerned his reports with the satisfying intensity of their services. During the meeting at Brownsville, for example, he “just reveled in God’s love; cyclones of real, heavenly dynamite and love just bursting through and over my soul.” Sunday’s service stretched out all day: “Sunday morning we had music and dancing.” At “3 p.m. and 7 p.m.” they were still “shouting

---

<sup>18</sup> *Live Coals of Fire*, October 6, 1899, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Live Coals of Fire*, October 6, 1899, 4.

and dancing”: “Sisters Skipper, Snowden and others kept things lively with praises to God.” Finally, “Sister Brooks received the dynamite.”<sup>20</sup>

The reception of fiery and explosive baptisms left a residue of witnessing power in Brownsville and other communities that facilitated the continuation of spiritual encounters between the visits of evangelists like Sam Page. As an independent holiness preacher in the mid-1890s, he might leave a town rejoicing over fifty to a hundred people “saved and sanctified” while he was there. As an official evangelist of the upstart Fire-Baptized Holiness Church a few years later, he might take equal satisfaction from seeing a dozen or fewer people “saved and sanctified,” knowing that he had left behind a covenanted band of soul winners newly-empowered by “fire and dynamite.”

Rarely did Sam Page leave a meeting empty handed. At least once, though, he thought he had. He rose to his feet to issue an altar call after W. W. Avant had preached in a Magnolia, North Carolina schoolhouse on a Sunday afternoon in 1901: “Who wants to be saved, sanctified, baptized with the H[oly] G[host], baptized with fire, or with dynamite?” There was no response. After a period of uncomfortable silence, Brother Page posed another question: “Who needs any more religion that they already have?” No one came forward; not even one hand was lifted in the air. Undeterred, Page boldly offered this prayer in the hearing of the unresponsive gathering: “O Lord, I thank thee that I have found one congregation in the world who have all the religion they need.” Though Sam Page may have deemed his efforts in Magnolia unfruitful, the humble preacher known for planting pecan trees wherever he lived and watermelon seeds whenever he traveled, planted one important spiritual seed that day when a young George Floyd Taylor heard for the first time of a blessing of power subsequent to sanctification.<sup>21</sup>

Whether as an independent holiness evangelist for four years or as a member of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church from 1897 until the 1911 merger or thereafter an evangelist for the Pentecostal Holiness Church until his death in 1934, Sam Page never lost the keen sense that his calling was to do battle for souls—to pray through until he accessed the power needed to break the hold of the devil—power sufficient to pull the unregenerate back from the brink of hell and power sufficient to set regenerated people free from the grip of this world.

We find a good example of this in a 1906 report Brother Page sent to the *Live Coals* at the conclusion of a tent meeting he conducted in Eastman, Georgia with Thurman Cary: Closed “a battle of two weeks here last night. The devil is well-fortified here; his entrenchments and fort are well-built, but we got a few bombs to take effect, and grape and canister did some deadly work. We also did some sharp-shooting to the demolition of his kingdom. He has told the people around here to believe there is a Jesus and be baptized and they will be saved; takes them into what he calls the church, and lets them graze on what they please, and, as a shepherd, calls anything they eat good pasture, even when they graze on Beelzebub’s lawn, if they drink whiskey, play cards, desecrate the Sabbath or anything else, . . . he says it is alright, just so long you are baptized. I told them that this was hatched in hell, and the hen that hatched the ‘biddies’ would carry them back there at roosting time.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Live Coals of Fire*, February 23, 1900, 8.

<sup>21</sup> George Floyd Taylor, “Our Church History, Chapter V: Organizing,” *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, February 7, 1921, 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Live Coals*, November 28, 1906, 4.

This kind of preaching made some mad before they got glad. M. D. Sellers, who came to call Brother Page his “spiritual father,” admitted that when he first heard the man preach salvation and sanctification that he did not like “a bone in his body.” In fact, he ran from the tent in a rage, but on the way down the road he had terrifying visions that drove him back to the tent. And from the moment “I fell in the altar and God saved me,” I loved “Brother Page . . . better than any person on earth, aside from my own family.” In fact, Sellers reported, “My wife accused me of loving Brother Page more than I loved her. It was his godly life I loved so much.”<sup>23</sup>

M. D. Sellers loved Sam Page’s combination of personal humility, bold preaching, and sacrificial love for the hurting. Brothers Sellers also admired his uncompromising dedication to the particular application of holiness principles: not eating food prepared on Sunday, not taking medicine when sick, not even shining his shoes on the Lord’s Day. Brother Page once walked thirty miles to preach on a Sunday night, Sellers recalled, because his Saturday train was delayed and could not arrive at his destination until after midnight. So he got off the train, slept where he could, and headed out on foot at daybreak.<sup>24</sup>

In Sam Page’s mind, this severe level of purity was vital to maintain the anointing necessary to bombard the devil’s strongholds. One obvious way that Brother Page protected his purity was through his commitment to teamwork and accountability in his evangelistic work. In every Sam Page meeting you would see at least one co-worker ministering with him. And whenever possible, his wife Emma traveled with him too.

In every Sam Page campaign, those in attendance could also count on at least one “healing service,” usually held toward the end of the meeting once enough people had embraced his message of purity and power that he could organize a prayer band (over which he usually appointed a newly-converted woman). This group helped him battle doubt and build faith in the community so effectively that the healing service often witnessed the conversion of some of that town’s vilest sinners.

Another feature in many of Sam Page’s tent meetings was the appearance of a woman preacher. He just loved woman preachers and rejoiced at the opportunity to turn his pulpit over to one. These examples come from his tent crusades in the summer of 1896:

- At Hub, North Carolina: A “good sister,” a Missionary Baptist from north helped Page and Avant “stand firm in the battle” and they let her preach a “fire-baptized” message for several services. Same Page clearly enjoyed seeing the crowd’s reaction to sight of a Baptist woman preaching. Even better, she was a Baptist woman preaching holiness—and a Yankee! The saints in Hub were being tested. All true Christians, he wrote, will work together for souls “regardless of what sect their name belongs to or what sex they are.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> M. D. Sellers, unpublished memoir; “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 9-10.

<sup>24</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 9-10.

<sup>25</sup> *Way of Faith*, July 8, 1896, 5.

- At Long Branch, South Carolina: “We had a dear Baptist sister preach for us four times.” Her face “lit up with heavenly love and won all classes to her and killed the opposition to women preachers.”<sup>26</sup>
- At Lumberton, North Carolina: Mattie Perry joined W. W. Avant and the Pages in a meeting. Sam described her as a “grand little woman, . . . every ounce given to God.” He marveled at the number of people who were healed when she preached or who laid their gold jewelry on the altar when she spoke on supporting foreign missions. Consequently, he gave her most of the services.<sup>27</sup>

Sam Page was more than willing to share his pulpit with anyone he perceived to be called and anointed by God without regard to gender, appearance, or denominational connection. But at least once in each tent meeting—if not more than once—Brother Page would deliver his testimony. He typically prefaced his riveting story with a song: “Come on board and ship for glory / Be in haste, make up your mind / For our vessel’s weighing anchor / You will soon be left behind.” Then he would start by telling his audience that before he met Jesus he was the meanest man and worst infidel in North Carolina.<sup>28</sup>

We are blessed that the noted holiness preacher and scholar W. B. Godbey once preached with Sam Page and chose to describe Sam’s preaching style in his widely-read 1909 *Autobiography*: Back in 1896, Godbey remembered, “I went to North Carolina [to preach]. At the opening I was introduced to my comrade in labor, Sam Page, a former notorious infidel and drunken saloon-keeper, whose profligacy and wickedness had been proverbial in all the land. Having been wonderfully converted and gloriously sanctified, responsive to his heavenly calling he was then a flaming evangelist, shaking that country with the Pentecostal power, which, in the mercy of God, characterized his ministry. The power descended on us [each night] and waves of salvation began to roll over the audience, revealing Him who is mighty to save. Simultaneously with the rolling billows, Sam would leap on a bench and shout aloud, “Look here, all ye drunkards, gamblers, blasphemers, thieves, murderers, and adulterers, and see me. Do you not know that I am Sam Page, the saloon-keeper, drunkard, blasphemer, gambler and infidel? See what God will do for you if you will repent of your sins and seek Him with all your heart as I did. Oh, He will wonderfully save and gloriously sanctify you!”

Inspired by the startling boldness of his tall, raw-boned preaching partner, the diminutive Godbey leapt on the bench, threw his arms around Sam Page, and shouted to the people: “Look at me, O ye good [church members] Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and Campbellites, who keep the moral law and walk irreproachably before the world, but have never been born from above, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and know not what it is to receive a new heart. I was once where you are and as surely on my way to Hell as Sam Page in his saloon. . . .”<sup>29</sup>

Now we have met Sam Page. In putting flesh and spirit on the bare bones of his list of appointments and accomplishments, “S. D. Page” will no longer be just a lifeless name listed in

<sup>26</sup> *Way of Faith*, August 5, 1896, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Way of Faith*, September 16, 1896, 1, 5.

<sup>28</sup> “Memorial Issue,” *PHA*, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *The Autobiography of William Baxter Godbey* (Cincinnati: God’s Revivalist Press, 1909), 12-13.



our chronicles. He will be Sam Page the saved and sanctified ex-barkeeper who loved women preachers, who refused to shine his muddy shoes between meetings on Sunday, who gave his best suits and often his last dime to encourage his fellow preachers, who laid in the woods all day wrestling in prayer with principalities and powers in high places, and who jumped up a bench when the Spirit of conviction started to sweep through his tent and filled the altars through the power of his testimony. And once you have met Sam Page you have yet one more window opened on the spirituality of the early Pentecostal Holiness Church.

Before closing, I want to get rather personal and dig into Sam Page's pockets. He generally had a crumpled bag of watermelon seeds and a few dollars resting there uncomfortably together. Florence Goff said that he would stop at the oddest places and run to the side of the road to dig a shallow hole. Returning to the wagon or car he would say with a big smile, "Someone will get a melon bye and bye." And before long, she added, he would find some needy preacher or sinner and plant his money in the soil of their affliction.<sup>30</sup>

It strikes me that all of Sam Page's life he was planting seeds.

- Seeds of conviction. Seeds of salvation.
- Seeds of holiness. Seeds of hope.
- Seeds of correction. Seeds of encouragement.
- Seeds of warfare. Seeds of healing.

I close by mentioning one other seed that Sam Page planted back in 1911. Not long after the merger, he was preaching in the hills of South Carolina. In addition to speaking about the need for pardon, purity, and power, he also planted the idea that every Christian has the responsibility to give sacrificially of his or her possessions to reach the lost and hurting people of the world. He was always raising money for some ministry—a printing press, a missions project, an orphanage. On this day he described the plight of the poor orphans at who were currently being gathered to the town where he lived. One girl was so moved that she went straight home, boxed up her extensive collection of dolls (even her very favorite one), and asked her father to ship them as soon as possible to the Falcon Children's Home. That young girl named Lila grew up to become the first President of the Women's Auxiliary and the founder of the Harvest Train.<sup>31</sup> Long after Sam Page's death, Lila Berry was still planting some of his seeds. Every gift brought to Falcon Children's Home on the annual Harvest Train represents another of Brother Page's melons coming up for someone to enjoy "bye and bye."<sup>32</sup>

I trust that you have enjoyed meeting Sam Page, the man elected here by his peers here in Falcon one hundred years ago to serve as our first General Superintendent. Now that we know him better, may we too carry a bag of his Fire-Baptized and Pentecostal Holiness seeds around with us in our pockets—and may we be as willing to allow the Holy Spirit to interrupt our hectic days

---

<sup>30</sup> "Memorial Issue," *PHA*, 10-11.

<sup>31</sup> Blanche Leon King, "A Leader Beloved," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, February 20, 1947, 12.

and lead us to the very spot by the side of the road where we need to kneel down in the dirt and plant them.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Several people offered me invaluable assistance and encouragement in my effort to track down the story of Sam Page. In particular, I want to acknowledge my debt to the late Reverends Eddie and Daisy Morris, Dr. Vinson Synan, Bishop Chris and Betty Thompson, Pastor Karen Lucas, the late Bishop Ronald Carpenter, and my constant “fellow traveler” Gwendolyn Woods. Each planted seeds in this project along the way.