

“Freedom of the Press is Guaranteed Only to Those Who Own the Presses”

— A. J. Liebling

By Henry M. Yaple

In the late nineteenth century, Benton Harbor, Michigan, was little more than a sleepy small town located on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. The arrival of Israelite preachers Benjamin and Mary Purnell in March 1903 ultimately made Benton Harbor the home of two extraordinarily prosperous communal societies and a thriving destination resort for the burgeoning city of Chicago just across the lake. It is my firm conviction that by the time of their arrival in southwestern Michigan the Purnells had learned how powerful the printed word could be. By December 1903, the Purnells' nascent colony had established a print shop with press, type, ink, and paper. It disseminated their message of salvation widely, and attracted converts from as far away as England and Australia. They owned their press, and they used the guarantee of freedom of the press with acuity and purpose. What follows is a concise history of the two communal societies, and a discussion of four early Israelite publications only recently discovered.

The Israelite House of David was founded in May 1903 by Benjamin and Mary Purnell. The City of David, first known as the Israelite House of David as re-organized by Mary Purnell, was founded by her on April 1, 1930. Each colony was located in Benton Harbor, Michigan, approximately two city blocks apart on Britain Avenue. The City of David came into being after Benjamin Purnell passed away and a deep schism split the original communal society into two feuding factions.

Almost from its inception, the House of David attracted the notice of reporters and authors of popular magazine articles. Over the years, the Benton Harbor Israelites seemed to generate plenty of activity for journalists to report and readers to devour eagerly. In June and early July 1907, riots erupted at the colony because two disaffected members tried to interrupt Benjamin's open air preaching. The colony band created a ruckus when they played loudly to drown out the ex-members' speeches.¹

During the next winter, the colonists built a public amusement park, Eden Springs, that drew summer crowds to Benton Harbor for the next sixty-five years.

Benjamin Purnell enjoyed baseball. Intense colony and local play developed the members' skills. The Israelite men became first-rate players, and ultimately fielded a traveling team that willingly took on any team from border to border and coast to coast. Long hair and beards were mandatory for male colonists because Jesus was their "waymark and pattern." The Israelites developed a lightning-fast, fifth-inning "pepper game" that always delighted crowds.² At some point during "pepper," the game ball would disappear only to re-appear in the beard or hair of an Israelite player. Naturally, the peripatetic, hirsute Israelites generated newspaper articles, and brought considerable positive publicity to the colony. Jerry Kirschebaum's article, "The Hairiest Team of All," in the April 13, 1970, issue of *Sports Illustrated* carefully recounts the traveling baseball team's activities within the context of colony history.

In 1927, the colony made headlines when the State of Michigan forcibly brought Benjamin Purnell into court to answer charges of fraud and sexual misconduct with young colony women. A sensational fifty-one day trial ensued. Judge Fead ruled for the State of Michigan in November 1927. The colony was to be taken into receivership and dissolved. The colony appealed and Benjamin passed away in December 1927. The Michigan Supreme Court recognized that Benjamin's death eliminated a "public nuisance," and the court reversed Judge Fead on June 3, 1929.³ Subsequently, a theological schism opened and the members divided into two colonies.

The dispute centered on Mary Purnell. Members of the old or original House of David believed that Benjamin was the true seventh messenger from heaven, sent to "ingather" the elect—144,000 men and 144,000 women—before the Millennium. Mary's faithful followers believed that Mary and Benjamin were "Shiloh Twain," and that "the woman would finish the work." It was thus imperative for all Israelites to follow her. Mary's faithful literally followed her as she walked two blocks east on Britain Avenue, on April 1, 1930. The new communal society began its life on a large vacant lot, but with a division of cash and farms from the old colony. In less than a year, the industrious and frugal members had constructed nearly the entire new colony. Today the two colonies continue to exist, albeit in greatly diminished numbers. The grounds of the House

of David's famous amusement park became derelict in the early 1980s. In contrast, the City of David, on Benton Harbor's Britain Avenue, has been carefully maintained by R. James Taylor, the colony trustee.

Despite its storied history, the House of David seems to have attracted relatively little attention from academic scholars except for two monographs, one published in 1981 and another in 1990.⁴ That neglect is unfortunate because both colonies' rich, complex history merits research and considered evaluation by academic scholars. In an effort to make the printing history of these two colonies accessible, I have been compiling a descriptive, annotated bibliography of the two colonies' imprints. The Richard W. Couper Press plans to publish *"Prove All Things Hold on to the Good:" A Descriptive, Annotated Bibliography of Israelite Imprints from the House of David and the City of David, 1902-2009* in 2012. Archive and library holding symbols are attached to each record in the bibliography so that anyone may locate the imprints.

The Israelites' printed works began in 1902 or early 1903 and concluded in 2009. During these 107 years, the House of David was responsible for more than 350 separate imprints. Mary's City of David print shop created at least eighty separate imprints. As might be expected, Israelite imprints from the two colonies are now relatively rare. Michigan archives and libraries have remarkably good and publicly accessible collections of Israelite printing, and the Hamilton College Library in Clinton, New York, has been able to develop a notably deep collection of Israelite imprints quite recently. Indeed, four recent acquisitions by Hamilton College provide some amazing insights into the Purnells' activities in 1902 before they migrated to Michigan, a startling glimpse of how the physical and financial details of the "ingathering" were accomplished, and insight into the seeds of the ultimate schism.

Neither Benjamin nor Mary Purnell had much, if any, education beyond grade school. Indeed, Benjamin wrote, "Education counted as dung. Low estimate. Dung more useful. Dung can be put on the ground and do something."⁵ Despite their lack of formal education, the Purnells somehow came to recognize the enormous power of the printed word. The Purnells' early years together must have been grim and difficult. They preached on the street as they wandered rural portions of the midwestern United States, they worked occasional jobs, and they lived for a time as members of the small Israelite colony headed by Michael Mills in Detroit, Michigan. During the 1927 trial, Benjamin testified that "at cock crowing

on the morning of 12 March, 1895, the graft lighted upon him.”⁶ He became the true seventh messenger; his task was to “ingather” the elect to await the Millennium. He also began to write *The Star of Bethlehem*, which became the Benton Harbor Israelites’ primary text. According to Benjamin’s 1927 testimony, the printing of this work was completed in Ashland, Ohio, in 1902.⁷ It came out in four physical volumes divided into seven books. Curiously, it was paginated continuously from book one, page one, through book seven, page 780.

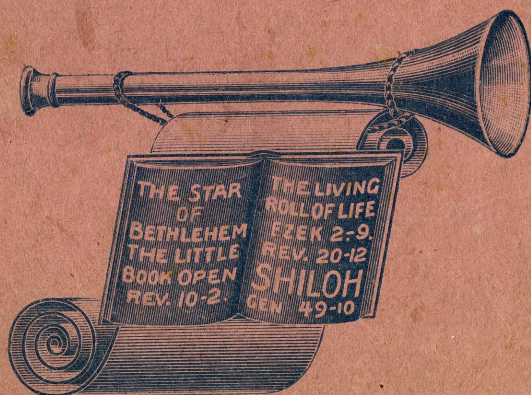
Thanks to two pamphlets now held at the Hamilton College Library, we know now that British Israelites attacked *The Star of Bethlehem*. One pamphlet is entitled *Answer of the Spirit: The Sword and Spirit of the House of David*⁸ and the other is *A Notice to the Israel of God and Members of the New and Latter House of Israel*.⁹ Although it is a minor point, *Answer of the Spirit* may contain the first printed use of the term “House of David.” The important fact is that both pamphlets vigorously refute “the unlawful and false attacks which have been grossly made by Mr. John Maxwell and Mrs. Ann Rogers upon *The Star of Bethlehem: The Living Roll of Life*.” Prior to these “attacks” Benjamin and Mary must have shipped copies of *The Star of Bethlehem* to British Israelites in the hope that it would be recognized as an important message from the true seventh messenger. Clearly, Rogers and Maxwell did not accept the message from Benjamin and Mary. More importantly, the pamphlets reveal that the Purnells responded with some speed, and in print, to the “unlawful and false attacks.” I assume the Purnells must have reasoned that if the printed *Star of Bethlehem* could provoke attacks, then printed pamphlets might counter those attacks, and possibly persuade their opponents to recognize Benjamin as the true seventh messenger. The Purnells were much too poor to afford a trans-Atlantic crossing to defend themselves, but printed pamphlets mailed to England might have been viewed as an effective, much less expensive alternative. The English response to the Purnells’ counter-attacking pamphlets is unknown.

Neither *Answer of the Spirit* nor *Notice to the Israel of God* is attributed in the usual manner, and neither carries an imprint date. However, both pamphlets mention the Purnells and their residence in Fostoria. *Notice to the Israel of God* closes by stating that “‘The Star of Bethlehem,’ The Living Roll of Life can be obtained by writing to MARY AND BENJAMIN, Fostoria, Ohio.”¹⁰ Benjamin had testified in court that he and Mary spent fourteen months in Fostoria living with Silas and Cora Mooney.¹¹ It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that these two pamphlets were printed

ANSWER OF THE SPIRIT



ANSWER TO LETTERS
WRITTEN FROM THE
HEADS OF THE SIXTH
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
TO AMERICA. ❁ ❁ ❁



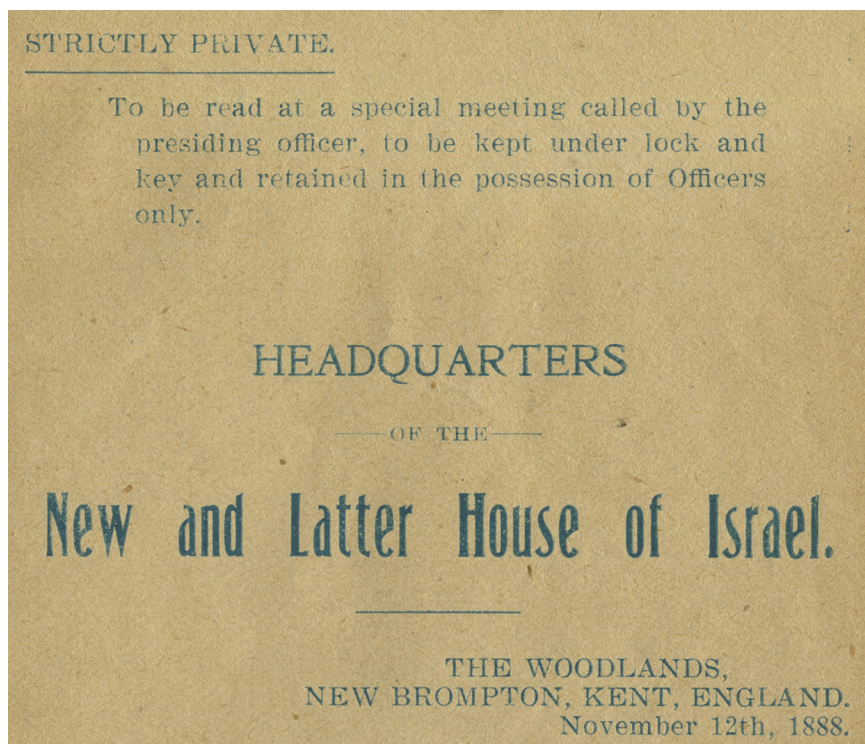
Front cover of *Answer of the Spirit: Answer to Letters Written from the Heads of the Sixth Church of England to America.*



Front cover of *A Notice to the Israel of God and Members of the New and Latter House of Israel.*

while the Purnells were living in Fostoria sometime in 1902 or early 1903.

With regard to the caption title of *Notice to the Israel of God*, reproduced below, of particular interest is what it reveals about the behavioral and typographical tendencies that developed fully once the colony had been established in Benton Harbor.



The Purnells' words show an arresting penchant for secrecy, a strong desire to create an inner circle of believers, a tendency to restrict information to that group, and an amazing faith in the power of the printed word. Also note how upper and lower type sizes are mixed with indiscriminate relish. Furthermore, a title page is absent on this pamphlet, and on *Answer of the Spirit* as well. Once established, the House of David print shop mixed upper and lower case type casually and frequently, and regularly omitted title pages and imprint dates. Caption titles usually replaced title pages on Israelite imprints from Benton Harbor. As A. J. Liebling phrased it so neatly, the owner of a printing press enjoys complete freedom. The

Purnells and the colony always exercised the freedom of their press with considerable enthusiasm.

In their peripatetic career, the Purnells' migration to Benton Harbor from Fostoria, Ohio, in March 1903 was clearly the best move they ever made. Members of the Baushke family of Benton Harbor were prosperous carriage makers, and had been involved with the Israelite religion. According to Clare Adkin, the Baushkes financed construction of the young colony's first building, the Ark. It had three floors. The first contained the colony print shop, and the second and third floors were used as a communal residence.¹³ The Purnells plus their five followers had arrived in Benton Harbor in March 1903, founded the House of David in May 1903, and by December of that same year they had published their first issue of their newsletter, *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom*. It carried a photograph of their print shop and an obviously proud statement of their recent publishing activity.

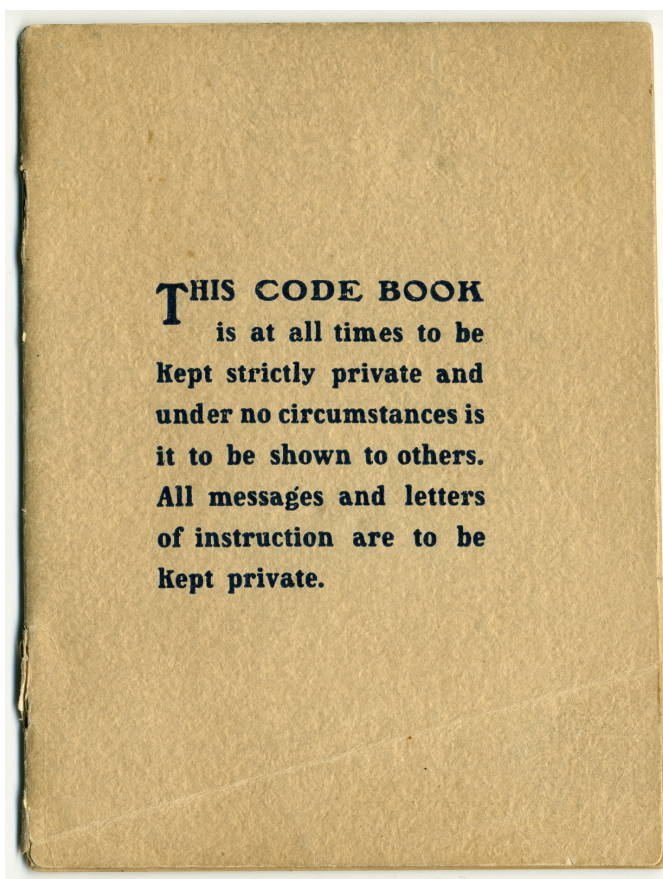
We have made considerable headway in reprinting 'The Star of Bethlehem' which is now being electrotyped having finished the first book, we are now launching this eight page paper called *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom* which shall soon go around the world for the ingathering of Israel.¹⁴

In effect, the Purnells had learned from their experience with the publication of *The Star of Bethlehem* and the two small Fostoria pamphlets. *The Star of Bethlehem* and the Fostoria pamphlets had been job printed, but when the Purnells had the financial means, they acquired a press, type, ink and paper. The new colony members became printers to spread the Israelite message abroad. England and Australia were the targets of their new publications from Benton Harbor: a 1903 second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem*; regular monthly issues of *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom*; and a growing stream of pamphlets such as *Book of Life Addressed to the Twelve Tribes of Israel Scattered Abroad*, *The New House of David*, *A Copy of a Letter Written by J. J. Jezreel*, and *The Invitation to the House of David*. These pamphlets and more were printed by the House of David in the years 1903-1905. This is the very period when the Purnells actively sought to bring Israelites to their "ingathering."

Travelers ever, the Purnells voyaged to Australia in 1904-1905. Benjamin made a dramatic appearance to a "watch-night" assembly of Israelites in December 1904. In February 1905, the Purnells returned to Benton Harbor with eighty-five Australian Israelites to join the

“ingathering” on the shores of Lake Michigan.¹⁵ Beyond those basic facts, very little seems to be known about the gritty details of entire families leaving their homes, selling their personal goods, and donating their entire wealth to the House of David so they could become colony members.

Another Israelite imprint held by Hamilton College Library provides a startling glimpse into some of the practical aspects of the “ingathering.”¹⁶ A small pamphlet entitled *This Code Book* makes abundantly clear that operations must have been carefully planned, and potential members must have been selected and possibly even groomed for invitation to colony membership. *This Code Book* is a list of words encrypted with special meanings so that secure messages could be transmitted between “Headquarters” in



Front cover of *This Code Book*.

NOTICE.

When you receive a cable message, or telegram, of one word, or more, turn to your code book for the word you receive, and you will find the message which the word conveys, following the code word in the book.

Any of the following messages can be sent, by sending the single word over the wire which is found at the beginning of each message in the code book. For instance: You receive a message with the single word *Belt*. You turn to your code book for the word *belt*, and you find the message, which was to be conveyed to you, following the word sent in the code book. The message being, *Start home at once*.

Parties sending or receiving messages can refer to code book, and the message following the code word will be understood if the single word at beginning is sent.

Parties receiving messages should never fail to refer to code book, to find exact meaning of message.

For instance, I wish to send the following message: Be sure to start home June 21. By referring to the code, we find that *Audit fnm* is the message to be sent.

1

The following abbreviations are used: H. D. for House of David, M. B. for Mary and Benjamin, etc.

The code system for dates and figures is very simple and can easily be understood by reading the notice at top of page concerning dates and figures.

This code book is at all times to be kept strictly private and under no circumstances is it to be shown to others. All messages and letters of instruction are to be kept private.

The instructions of this code book is not to be observed except in case of cable, telegram or telephone.

CAUTION—Do not forget to look in Code Book so that messages can be properly interpreted.

2

Pages 1 and 2 of *This Code Book*.

Benton Harbor and the colony's traveling preachers. For example, if used in any message the word "Bath" means "Do Not Remain in London." "Battle" means "Do not Remain in Melbournae." The word "Bid" means "Remember the great ingathering has but commenced, and only those who can be used for work or who have money are being called in at present." The word "Between" means, "Do not encourage incurable sick people to come to Benton Harbor." In effect, Israel was intentionally planned to include only healthy individuals, who could make positive contributions to the communal society's growth and development. Sick people were costly, might easily divert energy from necessary work, and could hinder colony growth and development. Finally, *This Code Book* concludes with a list of words to be used to communicate amounts of money. The sums encoded could be as high as \$50,000—a very large amount of money in that era. Presumably, the colony's traveling preachers or field workers would notify "Headquarters" in Benton Harbor that sums of money derived from the sale of new members' personal effects and real estate were going to arrive. The staff would then be prepared to receive the funds and to deposit them safely in the House of David.

The Purnells always maintained strict control over all materials from their print shop. Indeed, most of the individual titles printed by the colony

were intended “for Israel only.” These included the colony’s monthly serial *Shiloh’s Messenger of Wisdom*, multiple titles by Benjamin and Mary such as the four volumes of *The 7 Baskets of Fragments*, individual works by Benjamin such as the six-volume *Balls of Fire* set, or *The Comforter*, Mary’s multi-volume work. As these titles suggest, the Purnells had a penchant for publication in multi-volume sets and serials.

Some documents printed for the “Gentiles” were intended to attract converts, such as the introductory leaflet *The Key to the House of David* or the seven volumes of *The Book of Wisdom*. Potential converts were expected to read and master each of these titles before they were permitted to purchase the seven books of *The Star of Bethlehem*. Other items printed for “Gentiles” were broadsides given away freely at Eden Springs such as *Washington’s Vision*, or salable souvenirs such as *Views of the House of David*. The print shop also produced enormous numbers of tickets for their miniature steam railway, post cards, restaurant menus, hotel invoices, jam and jelly labels, etc. Indeed, House of David printing may have been one of the colony’s most active and intense endeavors.

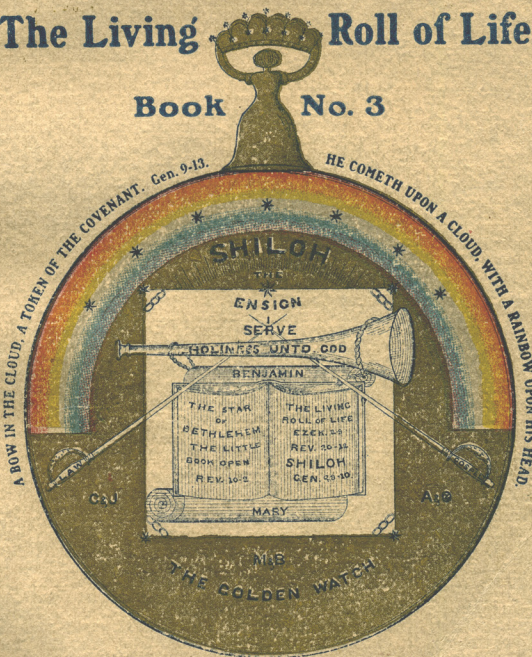
The Hamilton College Library’s very rare 1903 second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem* sheds light on how the schism that split the House of David into two colonies developed. As indicated by the quotation from the very first issue of *Shiloh’s Messenger of Wisdom*, the colony was deep into the process of printing the second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem* in late 1903. Presumably, a second edition may have been necessary because the first edition had been exhausted by distribution to Israelites in the United States, England, and Australia in the effort to attract new members to the fledgling Benton Harbor colony; however, the iconography of the second edition’s cover makes it apparent that whatever else this edition may have been, it was manifestly Mary’s edition of *The Star of Bethlehem*.

The cover of the second edition displays a large gold watch, whose stem is a woman’s figure in gold silhouette. Benjamin and Mary Purnell were photographed frequently at the Benton Harbor colony between 1903 and 1910. In these photographs, Benjamin usually wears a white suit, while Mary almost always wears a long dress and a large gold watch pendant from an ornate gold necklace. Given the colony’s relatively small numbers, most, if not all, of the Israelites would have understood that a pendant gold watch with a woman’s figure as the stem suggested or symbolized their sister Mary Purnell. Furthermore, this second edition’s title page states, “Copyrighted Mary and Benjamin.” The 1902 first edition carried

THE Star of Bethlehem

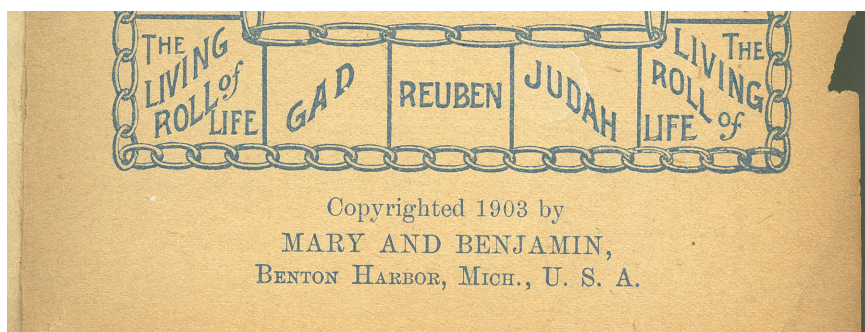
The Living Roll of Life

Book No. 3



And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. Mal. 3-1.

Front cover of *The Star of Bethlehem: The Living Roll of Life. Book No. 3* [2nd. ed.]



Detail from the title page of the second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem*

their names as “Benjamin and Mary.”

The reason for a new, third edition of *The Star of Bethlehem* was announced in *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom*.

On account of many printer's errors in the first edition of the Star, which in many places changed the original meaning, it was necessary that it be revised and these errors corrected, which work, we have been busily engaged in this winter and are now ready to announce that the first volume of the Star of Bethlehem, i.e. the corrected edition, is ready to be sent out to those who are ready to receive the same.¹⁷

It seems telling that there is no mention of the second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem*, only the first. Many copies of the second edition were destroyed in a 1907 fire; however, Benjamin does not cite the fire as a reason for a new edition, but only refers to the printing errors in the first edition. It is my own opinion that the 1903 second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem*, so clearly Mary's, helped sow seeds of distrust and dissension. During Benjamin Purnell's lifetime, the Israelites of the House of David recognized that he was the true seventh messenger and their leader in all things spiritual and mundane. After his passing in December 1927, the group of Israelites that followed Mary east on Britain Avenue stoutly maintained that Benjamin and Mary were “Shiloh Twain,” and thus they shared the message. Upon Benjamin's death, Mary became the only true seventh messenger. Publications written by Mary and printed by the House of David in 1912 and 1925, as well as volume four of her *Comforter* that was printed in 1926 but not by the House of David, seem to suggest that Benjamin may have had reason to be concerned about his primacy as the seventh and final messenger.

The second volume of Mary's *Comforter* was copyrighted March 12, 1912, and it contained 144 pages. Neither of these numbers was accidental or coincidental. It was exactly twenty-seven years earlier, on March 12, 1895, that Benjamin claimed the "graft" had lighted upon him and he became the true seventh messenger. Furthermore, the Israelites believed that the "elect" would consist of 144,000 men and 144,000 women. Was Mary claiming at least a portion of the message by this publication of the second volume of her *Comforter*? Once again, the cover of this second volume carried the iconography foreshadowed by the 1903 second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem*. It shows a gold pendant watch with the stem silhouetted as a woman's figure.

The third volume of Mary's *Comforter* was printed about 1925 by the House of David print shop. It also depicted on the cover a gold watch with a woman's figure as the stem. The frontispiece is a photograph of Mary, but she wears a string of pearls, not a gold pendant watch. The title page states, "Brief Discourses by Mary." The preface is signed, "Written by Mary." Reportedly, Benjamin said that "it contained one hundred and forty four pages, and one hundred and forty four delusions." Actually, it had 108 pages. Copies of this third volume are also quite rare. I have only been able to examine a copy owned by Michigan bookseller, Don Allen, and one at the Hamilton College Library. So far as I have been able to determine, no Michigan archive or library holds a copy of the first edition of volume three of Mary's *Comforter*.

After the City of David was established, Mary had a second edition of volume three of *The Comforter* printed by the City of David print shop. She also wrote volumes five, and six of *The Comforter* and saw them published there as well. While still resident at the House of David, Mary had tried to have volume four of her *Comforter* printed by the House of David print shop in 1926. Benjamin was unavailable; he had disappeared after participating in a colony Christmas dramatic production in 1922. He disappeared because the Michigan State Police wanted him to answer charges of fraud and sexual misconduct. He did not reappear until the police, led by disaffected member Bessie Daniels Woodworth, discovered him in the colony's Diamond House during November 1926. Benjamin's "absence" in those four years likely exacerbated his concern about his primacy as the true seventh messenger. It was learned after his death that he suffered from diabetes and tuberculosis. It seems only natural that he would have felt threatened and minimized by Mary's good health,

strength of character, and natural position as co-founder and obvious leader of the colony, and by her desire to write and publish her work. Writing and publishing Israelite doctrinal works was one of the primary means by which Benjamin had established himself. Furthermore, in this very period, 1924-1926, when Mary was writing successive volumes to her *Comforter*, Benjamin was writing and publishing his six-volume *Balls of Fire* set. Apparently, Mary did have at least one and perhaps as many as four typescript copies of volume four of her *Comforter* circulating in the House of David during 1926. I did find an old typescript copy of volume four at Mary's City of David. After the City of David was established, the new colony printed volume four of *The Comforter* in 1932, and on the title page it carried the date 1926.

It is worth noting that not only are there messages and meanings in the texts themselves, but the number of pages in House of David imprints, as well as the number of volumes or parts, and the iconography found therein are also significant. Both Fogarty and Adkin cite the 1927 typed trial transcript held at the Michigan Historical Commission Archives as their source for information on the fifty-one day trial of Benjamin Purnell.¹⁸ Fogarty states that "15,000 pages of testimony [were] recorded."¹⁹ It is not well known, however, that there is a printed transcript of the trial held by The Michigan State Law Library. It is the only copy of the printed trial record I have been able to find.²⁰

Careful examination of this printed trial record indicates that it must have come from the House of David print shop, but it is not, as is often the case, explicitly identified as a House of David imprint. The typeface, ink, paper, and leather-grained paper covers used to bind each volume match quite closely those same elements in other clearly identified House of David imprints from the period circa 1925-1930. It is neither an accident nor a coincidence that this printed record of the House of David's 1927 trial was divided and bound into seven volumes, and it was paged continuously from page one through page 5,286. The larger "Gentile" world may not have noticed it, but I feel reasonably certain that the gentle, quiet members of the House of David were well aware that their primary theological work, *The Star of Bethlehem*, and their colony's 1927 trial's printed *Record* each came from their print shop in seven books or volumes and were paged continuously from page one through page 780 and page 5,286 respectively.

I firmly believe that the number seven figures intentionally in Israelite imprints. *The Book of Wisdom* is a catechism to introduce "Gentiles" to the

Israelite religion, and in final form it was printed in seven volumes. *The Star of Bethlehem* was printed in four physical volumes and divided into seven books. The 1927 trial's *Record* was printed in seven volumes, and, as previously stated, the latter two works were paged continuously from page one through pages 780 and 5,286 respectively. Mary saw the second volume of her *Comforter* copyrighted March 12, 1912. That is twenty-seven years to the date—March 12, 1895—that Benjamin claimed “the graft lighted on him,” and he became the true seventh messenger. Nor is it an accident that Benjamin completed his last published work, the *Balls of Fire* set, in six, not seven volumes, and Mary completed her last work, *The Comforter*, in six, not seven volumes as well. I suggest that each of the “Shiloh Twain” fully intended for their colony members to receive the last (seventh) message after the Israelites had entered paradise. Finally, the publishing careers of the House of David and the City of David spanned 107 years, 1902-2009. The 107 year span does not seem coincidental to me nor does the fact that “the woman’s colony,” the City of David, “finished the work.”

Finally, as I hope is evident, these Israelite imprints, recently acquired by the Hamilton College Library, provide considerable insight into the somewhat tumultuous history of the two communal societies in Benton Harbor. Printing and their printed works were of more than a little importance to the Purnells and the two colonies. Printing the first edition of *The Star of Bethlehem* established Benjamin, and arguably Mary, as the theological leaders of the Israelites in the United States. The two Fostoria pamphlets defended the Purnells’ claim as the true seventh messenger, and they foreshadowed the House of David’s multiple imprints that helped to persuade Israelites from England, Australia and many parts of the United States to join the “ingathering” in Benton Harbor. *This Code Book* reveals more about the details of the “ingathering” than the Purnells may have wished. The 1903 second edition of *The Star of Bethlehem* indicates by the iconography of the cover that Mary Purnell was, at that time, part of “Shiloh Twain.” Indeed, it is my firm belief that such a pivotal figure as Mary Purnell merits careful study and evaluation by at least one diligent and empathetic scholar. The importance and richness of the Hamilton College Library collection of Michigan Israelite literature should be apparent from this discussion. Communal study scholars will find it essential to any future study of the two Israelite communal societies on the shores of Lake Michigan in Benton Harbor.

Notes

1. *Benton Harbor News Palladium*, June 24, 1907, 1.
2. The pepper game began as a warm-up routine that developed into a sleight of hand act. It became so popular that the team manager, Francis Thorpe, decided to use it at the fifth inning of each game. Email from R. James Taylor, Trustee, Mary's City of David, Jan 29, 2011.
3. Clare E. Adkin, *Brother Benjamin: A History of the House of David* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1990), 207.
4. The two monographs are: Robert Fogarty, *The Righteous Remnant: The House of David* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981), and Clare Adkin, *Brother Benjamin. Prove All Things, Hold Fast to the Good* ([Benton Harbor, Mich.; House of David, ca. 1906]).
6. Michigan. Circuit Court (Berrien Co.). *The People of the State of Michigan ... vs. the Israelite House of David. Opinion of the Court* (Lansing, Mich.: Robert Smith, ca. 1927), 16.
7. Michigan. Supreme Court. *Record*. [The People of the State of Michigan vs. the Israelite House of David]. ([Benton Harbor, Mich.: House of David, ca. 1927]), 4084-985.
8. Benjamin Purnell, *Answer of the Spirit: The Sword and Spirit of the House of David* ([Fostoria, Ohio: House of David, 1903]).
9. Benjamin Purnell, *A Notice to the Israel of God and Members of the New and Latter House of Israel* ([Fostoria, Ohio: House of David, 1902]).
10. Purnell, *Notice to the Israel of God*, 16.
11. *Record*, 4084-85.
12. Purnell, *Notice to the Israel of God*, [1].
13. Adkin, p. 16.
14. *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom* 1, no. 1, 8.
15. Adkin, 17.
16. The appearance of *This Code Book* at Hamilton College in 2010 raises the question of its authenticity. It is not explicitly identified as a House of David imprint. Nonetheless, it is very similar to most House of David imprints ca. 1904-1910. It is, for example, printed in blue ink. Additionally, the type font of *This Code Book* matches that in other House of David imprints of that period. Benjamin and Mary are mentioned, as are several known colony members. On the other hand, the paper seems to be a bit better quality than was normally used by the colony print shop. Most House of David imprints were printed on very cheap paper. As a consequence, they are now brittle and extremely fragile. There is, however, another factor that argues forcefully for *This Code Book* being an authentic product of the House of David print shop. By its very nature as a code book, the encryption must have been "STRICTLY PRIVATE," and intended only for certain, designated eyes. From the very first, the Purnells had demonstrated a clear tendency to restrict information to Israel. Non-members were "Gentiles." *This Code Book* exemplifies the Purnells' normal *modus operandi*.
17. *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom* 7, no. 11, 3.
18. Fogarty, 184. Adkin, xi.
19. Fogarty, 115.
20. Hamilton College Library has recently acquired volumes 1, 2, and 7 of this set.