

LETTER 101
1958

BRITISH ISRAELISM

Dear Dr MacRae,

We are confronted with a rather peculiar problem on which we would appreciate advice. An old Presbyterian minister retired, formerly a missionary under the USA Church, has applied to our Presbytery for membership. He is strongly of the "British Israel" persuasion. He says there is nothing in this position that contradicts the Gospel or the Westminster Confession. None of us feel that we are well enough acquainted with this teaching to pass a fair judgment and we all have the rather natural apprehension about "something new".

If you ... could give us some factual advice to help us reach a clear and fair decision in this matter, we would certainly appreciate it....

Dear

The view that you mention can be a comparatively minor error or it can be an extremely serious problem, depending on how thoroughly one holds it and how much he allows it to interfere with his view on other matters.

If one truly believes that the Bible is God's Word and free from error and that the only way that anyone can reach heaven is through the salvation that is made available to us through faith in our crucified and risen Saviour, the belief in British Israel might conceivably not be a great hindrance, except when it comes to prophecy. If one were to take all the prophetic teachings and mix them up with guesses about the future of the British empire, it might work havoc with many precious truths of prophecy. If one did not do this but held it only as a sort of sentimental attitude, it might not do a great deal of harm.