

## THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE OLD TESTAMENT

a review  
by

Allan A. MacRae, Ph.D., President and Professor of Old Testament  
Faith Theological Seminary, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

The translators of the New English Bible have allowed themselves a great amount of freedom. It has not been their object to make in any sense a word-for-word translation. They have instead sought to express in English whatever ideas they consider to have been in the minds of the original writers. It is obvious that in such a procedure the particular bias of the translator is bound to affect the translation to a very great extent. If a translator considers it absurd to think that the writer of an Old Testament book actually predicted events in the life of Christ, or had even a slight apprehension of doctrines that were not fully revealed until New Testament times, his rendering will naturally be different than if he agrees with the Apostle Peter that the writers of the Old Testament were carried along by a force outside themselves (cf. 2 Peter 1:21 in the NEB) and were led to express ideas that they did not themselves fully understand (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12 in the NEB).

If one believes that Jesus Christ was right when He said that the Old Testament spoke of Him and predicted not only His miraculous works and His wonderful life, but also His supernatural character, one can translate Micah 5:2 literally, as was done in the King James Version, and say that it predicts the coming of the One "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." When the phrase is thus translated literally, it clearly refers to our Lord's preexistence, and to the times when He appeared as the Angel of the Lord and spoke to Abraham, Moses, Joshua and others. If, however, one considers such an idea to be absurd, he will probably do as the New English Bible does, and translate the words freely as "one whose roots are far back in the past, in days gone by."