

the kingdom of God were generally presented under a nationalistic or particularistic aspect, there was a gradual development from limitation to enlargement, from exclusiveness to catholicity, from particularism to universalism. This tendency of the Old Testament religion toward universality is one of the most noteworthy features in the development of the idea respecting the Messianic kingdom. In this particular also, the religion of the Old Testament is distinguished from every other ancient religious system. Buddhism alone, it has been stated, has anything whatever of this tendency in common with Judaism.

The second significant feature in the historical development of Messianic prophecy has reference to the growth of the idea respecting individuality and spirituality in religion. There was a gradual development not only from nationalism to universalism, but also from nationalism to individualism. As late as the days of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, religion appears never to have been regarded as a relation between God and individuals. Up to this date, the notion of a community of true believers had not been definitely realized. In Jeremiah's times, however, the idea of a purely spiritual society made its appearance for the first time. As the idea of a national religion expired, and the idea of a universal religion arose to take its place, a kingdom composed of individual believers was conceived.

A new covenant, therefore, not with a single nation, but with a single soul, is now announced. In Jeremiah xxxi. 34, the prophet, speaking for Jehovah, says, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." The New Testament, as Prof. W. Robertson Smith observes, really joins on to this great idea of the new covenant in which the law of God is declared to be written on the individual heart. "From the time of Jeremiah downwards," he says, "the perennial interest of Old Testament thought lies in the working out of the problems of personal religion and of the idea of a spiritual fellowship of faith transcending all national limitation."*

* "Encyclopædia Britannica," vol. xix., pp. 819, 820.