

fluence upon the attitude of many students of the Ugaritic texts. Much has been made of the fact that the literary style of some of the Psalms and of certain portions of the prophetic books has much in common with the literary style of these epics. However, this is surely what one would expect in view of the fact that the languages are very similar and that literary style tends to spread easily from one place to another, particularly when the languages are closely related.

Starting from the similarity of literary style, some recent writers have gone on to note similarities of expression in reference to deity or deities, and to infer that a great part of the Old Testament is based upon a knowledge of this Canaanite material. On close examination of the material itself, it is necessary to write "not proven" against most of these assertions. It is entirely possible that the culture of the Israelites was affected to some extent by the culture of the Canaanites. And from the Ugaritic texts we get help in interpretation of words and of cultural activities depicted or alluded to at various points in the Old Testament. But when it comes to religion, the relation is one of antithesis, rather than of similarity. The alleged close similarities usually prove on investigation to be based upon a rather forced interpretation, or upon comparing things which may be verbally similar but which in the light of context are utterly distinct in their meaning and significance. The Ugaritic material has already been helpful in interpretation of Biblical words, and will be even more so in the future. But the attempts to show that the Bible was a development from the religion of Canaan, rather than a revelation from the God of Creation, when examined objectively and scientifically, prove to be quite without foundation.