

up the east coast. I would not do that. But if two of you went home and one told the story about me going to South America last summer and described my going down the one coast and going up the other and told a good many details and the other one told the story but had an opposite order but also had it last summer, and both stories had me involved in similar incidents, someone comparing the two would say that one of those fellows got the story mixed. We might not know which way I went, but it is very clearly the same story. Someone else might combine both accounts into one long document, and then someone might quote the two stories as if I had made two different trips to South America. As you see, such a parallel as that would prove two distinct documents because no one would write a story that way. But it goes further than that! It does not merely prove two distinct documents, it proves that the compiler did not know a great deal about it and that he thought that something was two stories which was really one. Such a thing would be inconsistent with any idea of a divine inspiration and it might be inconsistent with much intelligence on the part of the compiler. To prove that you would have to possess complete stylistic evidence and such evidence is far from being present. But besides that we have mentioned two other types of arguments, one of them — continuous narrative — would not have to be present at all if there were two sources. Yet, if you actually had such evidence, it would be a big step toward proving it and may make up for a lack of sufficient evidence from the stylistic viewpoint.

The other evidence, parallel passages, is one we have to handle with extreme care, because it is easy to forget that parallels may occur in any document! We have to ask the question, is this such a parallel as would not occur unless there were two different sources? It is an argument which can easily become inconsistent with any idea of truth in the narrative or of divine inspiration. If He chose to do so God could easily have caused Moses to combine two documents in this way, all of it being done under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in such a suggestion that would be contrary to our belief in God. But we have to find evidence He did; we must not just assume it.

If you really had parallel passages in which the same story is given as