

combination. It takes a number of separate phrases and sentences, and claims to find two complete stories. There are such a number of instances where we find this claim that at first sight they appear extremely convincing. But in order for them to be actually convincing, they must go on to prove that the stories contradict one another. If two stories, thus fitted together, actually contradict one another, that would make a very strong argument.

When you tell a story and you are not just telling it in order to give facts in the briefest possible way but in order to present an idea so that your hearers will really see the picture, you are inevitable going to repeat ideas. You are apt to give it in one sentence, and then in another sentence. You will probably describe a certain phase in one paragraph and then repeat it in another paragraph. The fact that someone can take the words of a story and rearrange them in such a way as to divide it into two complete stories does not necessarily prove there were really two stories told. There is usually some repetition in order to make the picture clear and vivid. The fact that the words can be rearranged in such a way as to tell the story twice does not, in itself, prove much. Of course, the presence of what is actually a real contradiction would point rather strongly against there having originally been only one story. Thus alleged contradiction, if found, is really the strongest argument.

The fact that you can divide a story in two by taking a phrase here and a phrase there, a sentence here and a sentence there, and thus make two stories out of it, each of which is fairly complete, does not in itself prove that there were originally two documents. That is a statement I can make with certainty and I feel very definitely that it can be proved, but I do not want you to take it on my words. I want you to think it through and look into evidence bearing on it. In the case of the flood, this is what is done. They take a sentence here and a paragraph there, a paragraph here and a sentence there, two or three words here and two or three words there, and they propose to give us two complete stories of the flood. The thing I want to stress is that this in itself does not prove that there were originally two complete stories. As further evidence, if you take either of their accounts, you can still find considerable repetition. Repetition is an important part