

Bible gives false opinions on matters of our interest. The cause of disease is alleged to be one of these. Skeptics suggest the Bible teaches that demons, rather than microbe infections, are the cause of disease. If such were the case, an erroneous opinion would be expressed.

4. Errors of conflicting ideas: By this it is meant that two biblical writers have contrary ideas about ethics, morals, etc. Dr. Bratton also states in his book (p. 4): "The conclusion of Ecclesiastes that 'man has no pre-eminence above the Beast' is certainly not on a plane with the author of the Fourth Gospel, which says: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God'." These are the basic problems for the student: the alleged areas of contradiction that war against the true composition of the Bible. What is there to be said about these? Five key principles will help us see how these matters are discussed. These principles are not "tricks" or crude devices, but are common interpretative principles in all literature. Let us see what they are and how they help in our difficulties.

40

Principle 1. The Bible must always be read in a *correct context* and with a detailed study of the *historical sense*. If one does not do this, he may read passages like "Be fruitful and multiply" and assume the Bible teaches polygamy. This rule helps in the Goliath account. In the suggested contradiction the key words are "another account of the same battle." But when the passage is put into its proper historical sense, it relates to battles fought many years apart (different places of war, kings of Israel, participating soldiers, etc.). The Gittite family of Goliath had its own peculiarities, and these two men named Goliath may have been brothers with the common family name; or may have been father and son, or cousins, etc. Only a careless study could suggest a contradiction. Close attention to the historical settings and context is