

## TYPOGRAPHICAL CORONER

#1

Most readers of The URANTIA Book believe that while the Book may not be "inspired", the text is nonetheless free from human errors. Unfortunately, however, there are occasional errors in typography that are more significant than a mis-spelled word or a missing mark of punctuation. It is the purpose of this column to examine possible errors of this kind in public so that many readers of the Book will have the opportunity to review questionable passages, to offer interpretations, and to contribute to the process of the "reconstruction" of the text if that step appears to be necessary. This column will not, as a rule, deal with broad philosophical issues except as they may shed light on particularly obscure passages, but will instead concentrate on clearing up some of the small but sometimes significant problems with the text of The URANTIA Book.

Readers who have been puzzling over the meaning of a particular phrase, sentence, or paragraph are encouraged to send their questions, even if they do not believe the problems to be due to typographical errors. We will try to shed some light on them.

Thankfully, the apparent errors in The URANTIA Book are very few. Those entrusted with the transcription, typesetting, and proofreading of the text did outstanding work, and this is evidenced by the almost total lack of obvious typographical errors such as mis-spellings, but some did slip through. A simple but significant example is that found on page 883 of the first and second printings. The last line on that page (referring to the retreat of the red men from Asia to the Americas) reads: "...and when the land passage to the west, over the Bering isthmus, became passable, these tribes were not slow in forsaking the inhospitable shores of the Asiatic continent."

There is little question that the passage that opened was to the east of the red men and that it led eastward. But for some reason, the text as originally printed read "west". The wording of the text could be correct if the word "west" refers to a place rather than to a direction, as in: "The west is largely capitalist, while the east is composed mainly of communist nations." But there is no evidence

in the context of the quote that the revelators would use such a term to refer to the western hemisphere—particularly since the word is not capitalized. Though even with the capitalization, the word "West" would introduce a concept which was not defined or alluded to in the text. (This problem was brought to the attention of the Foundation many years ago, and was corrected in the third and subsequent printings.)

The "Bering" problem is not significant in its spiritual, moral, or even historical import. It is an error that most of us never even noticed because we knew what direction the red men had travelled and were not at all distressed or confused by the textual error. What is significant about this problem is that it illustrates very clearly the fact that the text of The URANTIA Book AS WE HAVE IT is **NOT** necessarily free from meaningful errors that must have had their origin at some point between the materialization of the papers and their appearance in print. This means that there was no final "List of Corrections" which the Midwayers passed on to the Forum after the Book had been typeset which noted all of the accumulated errors which had crept into the text up to that time. For these reasons I feel that it is appropriate to search the Book for any obscure passages that may be the result of human error and to resolve the apparent inconsistencies in the most reasonable and responsible manner possible.

I am well aware of the dangerous ground that is tread during such an exercise; we must never be led to interpret difficulty as error, or to substitute ease for diligence. But at some point these issues must be raised—better now and by those who are committed to the Book than later by those whose interest is to discredit the revelation because of surface inaccuracies or inconsistencies.

As this first column has already run on a bit too long, I will only examine one small typographical problem in this issue:

On page 326 of The URANTIA Book, the second paragraph of section #3, we find the following sentence: "The energy transformers are the conjoint creation of the Seven Supreme Power Directors and the Seven Central Supervisors." This sentence reads well—there is no obvious problem—unless you try to ascertain who the "Seven Central Supervisors" are! There is no mention of such a group anywhere in The URANTIA Book (as far as I have observed), but there is mention of the seven Supreme Center Supervisors (see p. 321 #1 for description).

Are the Supreme Center Supervisors the beings referred to as "Seven Central Supervisors"? Should "Central" read "Center"?

Some considerations:

1. There are seven Supreme Center Supervisors.

2. On page 324:7 we are told that "The Master Physical Controllers are the direct offspring of the Supreme Power Centers..." The energy transformers are Master Physical Controllers, and the Supreme Center Supervisors are Supreme Power Centers. (Though the Seven Supreme Power Directors are not.)

3. "Central" could be just an adjective rather than a part of a proper name, but the Center in Supreme Center Supervisors does not so much refer to location as to type of being: a Power Center. It would thus be inappropriate to refer to such beings as "Central Supervisors" even though they inhabit spheres very near the center of all things. Also, capitalizing "Central" would seem to indicate that it is part of a title and not an adjective.

4. Seven Central Supervisors could refer to an otherwise unrevealed order of beings, but such an order is not even listed in the personality registers of Paper 30 along with the other mentioned but unrevealed beings (pp. 333-4, 336-7).

After taking into account the above considerations, and remembering that there is little cause for the Universal Censor writing this paper to be mysterious, it is my belief that the sentence under consideration was intended to read either "...the Seven Supreme Power Directors and the Seven Center Supervisors" or "...the Seven Supreme Power Directors and the Supreme Center Supervisors." Both of these readings could be easily transmuted into "Seven Central Supervisors" by a momentarily inattentive typist or typesetter, and unfortunately, the sentence reads so well as it is printed in The URANTIA Book, that it would be very difficult for a proofreader to catch the error.

Reader comments regarding the content and conclusions of this column are most welcome—even encouraged.