

THE CAGE OF MAN

I stood on a plain among millions of men
Where thousands of books stood around.
The books were all giant and all must have been
In height fifteen feet from the ground.

For hundreds of years we had stayed on the plain
Enclosed by these volumes so tall,
And none could beyond the great circle attain.
But from the Beyond came a Call:

“Today is the day of salvation, O man!
If you will draw near unto Me,
Then I will to you, so then seek, if you can!
My Way is the way to be free.”

We all heard the Call, but not all would respond,
And some took no note of the Voice.
Those people cared not for the regions beyond,
But frolicking play was their choice.

A few of our number in groups and alone
Soon started to read and to page,
To locate the Truth and to make the way known,
So we could get out of this cage.

I watched as the author’s and titles were picked.
The subjects were chosen by taste:
Philosophies, science, religiously strict,
And textbooks incredibly based.

I wanted to run to the walls from the crowd
To help all the others explore.
But then came from one group a shout clear and loud,
“We’re lost, for the book goes no more!”

I looked and I wondered at what I could see—
A group with a last page to turn:
They pulled and they struggled to break the book free.
The page and its cover stood firm!

“It’s hopeless, it’s useless!” the others cried out,
As all of their books were the same.
The pages would turn but the last remained stout,
And so they stopped playing the game.

As many were leaving, I turned to the wall,
Remembering what I had heard.
And then on a sign post my eyes chanced to fall.
It said that “the Way is the Word.”

So then I began a most diligent search
And made a most marvelous find:
The Word that came neither from man nor from church,
But by the Almighty was signed.

The babble of men and the noise seemed to fade,
As page after page opened wide.
I found in the Word that my price was all paid
To leave from the cage to outside.

As onward I read, on each page I would look
With joy at the riches it bore.
At last, I arrived at the end of the Book
And turned the last page as a door.

Amazed and excited, I marveled to see
The beauties beyond the great wall.
Along with my freedom was waiting for me
The Lord of the Book and the Call.

The prison I left is still filled with mankind,
And some are still searching each page
Of books made by men, but so few seem to find
The Word that will free from the cage.

— *David L. Hatton, 1972*