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THE BOOK

Once upon a time, there was a man called Christian who lived in the City of Destruction with his wife and four children. He wasn't very rich but he worked quite hard and earned enough money to buy all the food and clothes which his family needed. He had a smart little wooden house and plenty of friends and neighbours to gossip with, and for a long time he was really happy. Then one day he found the book.

It was lying on the floor of his attic – covered in dust and cobwebs. He picked it up and rubbed the dirt off the cover with his sleeve. It looked very old. He sat down on a box and started to read it.

Poor Christian! The book he'd found was very frightening. Before he had read two pages, he was shaking all over, and by the time he'd reached the end, he was in tears.

'My wife and children mustn't see me like this,' he thought. 'I'd better go outside and give myself time to calm down.' He closed the book and tried to stand up – but he couldn't. There seemed to be a heavy weight pulling at his shoulders and dragging him back.

'What's the matter?' he wondered in alarm. He put his hands behind him and started feeling around. Soon his groping fingers made out the shape of a huge, knobbly sack on his back.



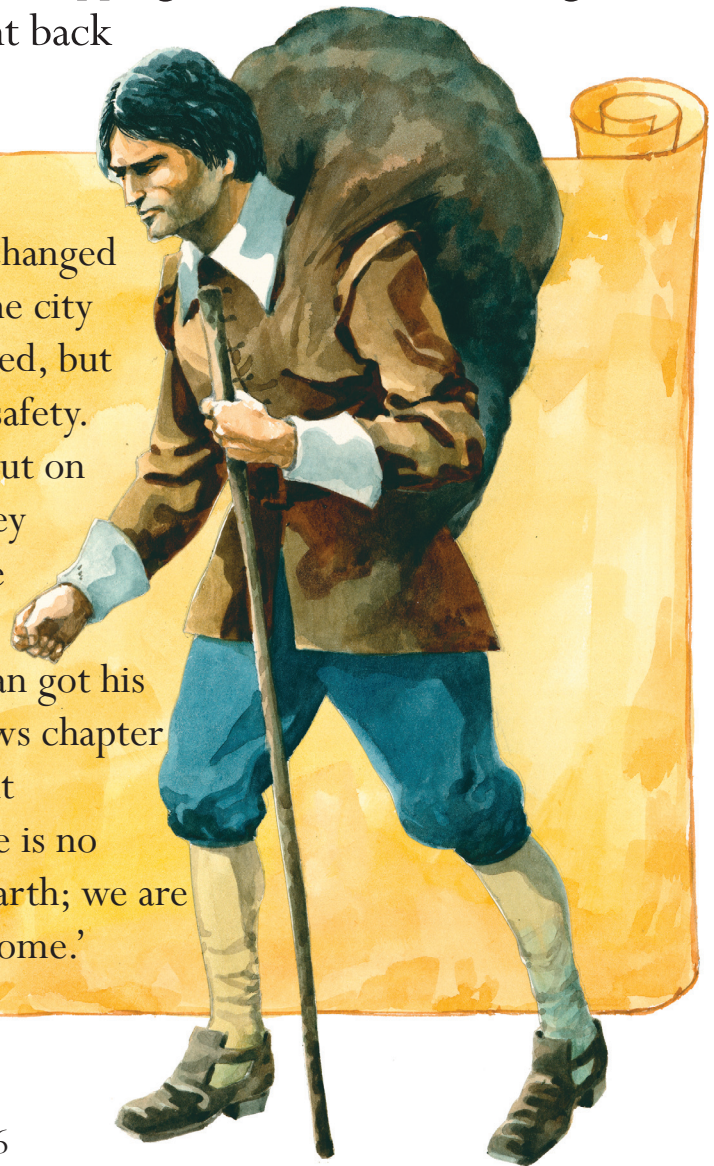
It was strapped to his waist and shoulders but, however hard he tried, he could not get it off.

'This is terrible! What am I going to do?' he thought. He tried to stand up again, and this time he just managed it. Then, puffing and panting, he got himself out of the house without being seen.

He paced up and down the garden, hoping the fresh air would make him feel better. But it didn't. The trouble was, he couldn't forget his burden, or his book – which he kept stopping to re-read, even though it upset him so much. When he went back indoors, he was in tears again.

Christian

Christian read an old book that changed his life. He was convinced that the city where he lived would be destroyed, but he didn't know where to go for safety. Then he met Evangelist and set out on an exciting and dangerous journey to the heavenly city. Very soon he met people who tried to mislead him. Perhaps John Bunyan got his idea from the Bible verse Hebrews chapter 13 verse 14 when he wrote about Christian as a pilgrim? 'For there is no permanent city for us here on earth; we are looking for the city which is to come.'



THE FAMILY PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

His wife saw him hurrying past the kitchen and called out, 'Why, whatever's the matter with you? And what's that thing on your back?'

'Oh, nothing, nothing!' Christian answered, trying to sound cheerful. But it was no use. Before long, his real feelings showed, and he had to explain why he was in such a state.

'I have just had some very bad news,' he said, looking sadly at his wife and children. 'One day, perhaps very soon, a terrible fire is going to sweep right through our city and burn everything up.'

The children hardly had time to feel frightened before their mother laughed and said, 'Whatever gave you that crazy idea?'

'I read it in this book,' Christian replied, holding it up.

'You can't believe all that you read!' exclaimed his wife.

'But it's true,' insisted Christian. 'Ever since I read about it, I've had this heavy pack on my back and felt miserable and worried.'

'You're just over-tired,' said his wife, firmly. 'And as soon as I've put the children to bed, I'm going to make sure that you get a nice early night.'

