GATHERING JEWELS

By Mrs. Paul E. King

Dorothy Hickson, 102 Larnar Avenue, Falls City, U.S.A. One time private secretary to Samuel Lauson and Lauson Productions, Inc. One time "most popular girl" at State U and homecoming queen of the same University; now, "old fuddy dud" (whatever that meant), "kill joy" and "puritan."
Hot tears stung her eyes . . . not because of the names, but out of sheer love and pity for those who were thus nicknaming her. Instinctively, she reached for the well-worn Bible she and Bob loved and shared.

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

She knew it by heart but felt reading it from the Word, which had become more precious to her than daffy bread, would help increase her deep sense of responsibility and the conviction that she was right.

She read on and on, "But godliness with contentment is great gain . . . and having food and raiment let us therewith be content.

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

She was startled by the loud jangling of the telephone. "Hello," and she spoke softly into the receiver. "Oh, it's you, Helen. Yes, Yes, I'm really quite well. But I can't go out tonight. I wouldn't think of leaving the children. No. No baby-sitter! Thanks for calling. Goodbye."

She sighed deeply as she placed the receiver back in the cradle and began preparation of supper. Looking out the west kitchen window she saw Barbara . . . head bowed, eyes closed and hands folded reverently. "Let's all pray as Calvin gets ready to preach," the tiny six-year-old was saying softly.

The children were playing church! Tears found their way to Dorothy's blue eyes and rolled joyously down her fair face as five-year-old Jamie announced proudly that he had a "special song"; whereupon he began a radiant journey up "Sunshine Mountain" much to the delight of the small congregation.

"And now Calvin will preach for us," Barbara announced as she took her place with those listening.

Dorothy watched as her oldest son walked to the rickety old orange crate "pulpit"... which was barely standing together and behind which Barbara had emerged..., and she listened as the boy began his "sermon"..., all the
Scripture verses she and Bob had been teaching the children since their conversion not too long back!

Reluctantly, she pulled herself away from the services on the back lawn to answer the musical door chimes.

"Honestly, Dorothy," and Sharon stepped inside the door. "It just doesn't add up! Helen told me she called you . . . wanted you and Bob over to play games tonight -- not bridge, as you undoubtedly suspected-and you refused. What's the matter with you and Bob?" and it was all too evident that her red-haired sister, though extremely pretty, was also extremely angry.

"Must we go over it again, Sis?" Dorothy asked, pity showing in her honest eyes.

"It just doesn't make sense, Dot! Can't you see it? Other mothers and fathers get baby-sitters and have fun. They refuse to become just . . . just . . . 'inert vegetables,' as the saying goes. It's a shame!" she continued in an animated voice, "you, with all the talent, beauty, poise and . . . and . . . glamour, a mere housewife and mother! Can't you see it, Dot? You were meant for the professional world -- not an isolationist nor one who's deprived from society! You and Bob had it made as a radio team until this religious business came along!" and she was pacing the floor furiously.

"Sharon," Dorothy's soft voice interrupted, "sit down, honey. Please."

"Sit down, you say? I get so furious when I think of it that I can't sit. My own sister! Too good to go to social gatherings anymore! Her children, too good for a baby-sitter! Ugh!"

Silently, the persecuted little mother, recently converted, moved quietly into the kitchen and continued the preparation of her evening meal. Bob would soon be home and she tried always to have only the most well balanced meals for her small family.

"Don't you realize what this is doing to you and Bob?" and the sister stood defiantly in the kitchen archway. "Helen and Gary are two of the most popular society figures in this city. It'll ruin you if you keep stalling."
"But I'm not stalling, Sharon. I'm through; so is Bob. We want no part of the so-called 'popular society' world. I tasted once of its unsatisfying fountain, dear Sis, and it did nothing but leave me with an aching void and a heavy heart. I was eating mere husks when the satisfying food of Canaan Land was within my reach . . . merely for the paying the price and asking for it. Bob and I found real happiness and true satisfaction in Jesus Christ."

"But must you give up your old life completely? Why not hire a baby-sitter and go out once a week? That couldn't hurt one bit."

"Bob and I gave up our old life gladly. You see, Sharon, the things we one time did we no longer care to do. As the Scripture says, 'Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' We don't have the least desire to go to the places we one time thought were so important; for the Lord, Who is Lord and King of our life, fully satisfies our deepest longing."

Still not satisfied, the girl tried another angle: "But look at this house! There are so many things you're needing and you don't have money. You could be making big money, Sis. You and Bob made fabulous money when you. . . ."

"Sharon, you must stop such talk," and Dorothy's statement was firm and positive. "This is our home, and Bob and I are happy with the things we have. True, Bob and I did make 'fabulous' money, as you put it, before we were converted; but has it never occurred to you that it cost us so much more to live . . . operas, theaters, nightclubs, social gatherings, parties, etc.? This ranting must stop once and for all. The Lord whom we love and worship and serve dwells here. Your bad spirit will cause Him to leave. Always, Bob, the children and I respect Him and live as though He were actually here in bodily form."

"But why not go out just once a week to something you think is legitimate and moral? Everybody's hiring baby-sitters these days and there are lots of capable and good ones who. . . ."

Dorothy's voice again interrupted, "Everybody isn't hiring baby-sitters. Bob and I plan to care for our own family. Helen and Gary are gathering earthly material possessions which will be left behind when they die. Bob and I are gathering jewels, too." A gasp escaped the pretty red-haired girl "Our jewels and our treasures we shall be able to take with us if we work
prayerfully and diligently at the job. Our jewels and treasures are these children God gave us. By God's grace and His help I mean to live holy and consistently and work daily at my God appointed job of bearing children and guiding my household toward Heaven. This leaves no room for a mother to turn her darling jewels over to baby-sitters. If at all possible, she is to be her children's baby-sitter. Someday, by His grace, I mean to take my jewels with me to Heaven. This is something Gary and Helen will never be able to do with all the wealth they possess."

Hearing "Onward Christian Soldiers" being sung lustily in the back yard, she motioned Sharon to the window.

"This is what happened since Jesus has come to abide at our house," she said.

Sharon walked softly through the archway and out the living room door, her arrogancy and anger overcome with the scene before her.

Dorothy looked upward as she whispered softly to Him Who was the Honored Guest, "Our jewels and Thy jewels! I shall do my best at using my time and my talents to gather them, and more jewels, into Heaven."