

SPIRITUAL TASK —THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (Matt 13)

by the Rev. George McCurdy

Story Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Meaning The thirteenth chapter of Matthew, verses 45 and 46, give us a summary of what the kingdom of heaven is like. The story is about a merchant. He knows exactly what he is looking for. He wants a goodly (beautiful) pearl. He sets out to find it. One can imagine that he must have looked at many pearls. He looked for quality and perfection. Finally he finds the one that captures his heart and mind. He leaves it and returns home to sell all that he has so that he may return and purchase it.

Task 1. Through this week take some time to review the correspondences in this short parable. Here are some references to look up: *Arcana Coelestia* 2967 (6); *Apocalypse Revealed* 606; 727; 916; *Apocalypse Explained* 840 and 1044 (3). 2. If you have a quiet moment take stock of how much your mind is like a merchant. A merchant is someone who knows his "merchandise". He/she has to. If you don't have a product that others want or need you don't stay in business for very long. But there are also others out there wanting you to buy their stuff. They shout, they try to persuade you how much you need to listen to their sales pitch. Decisions have to be made about what is being offered. How much are we taken in by them? Do we remain focused on the real or beautiful pearl? What, or who, is this goodly pearl? I hope you recognize that the Lord is the real pearl in the text. 3. Liquidation of assets—what does this mean spiritually? If we are going to get the pearl, certain resources have to be handy. Are we willing to take the risk to put it all on the line? Investment people tell us to diversify. The Lord asks us to put all of our "assets" in His stock portfolio. 4. Pearls: How are they formed? Isn't there, in the beginning, something of an irritation experienced by the oyster? Layering it over and over brings about the more perfect pearl. Have you any specific example where something of great irritation entered your life but you dealt with it and now look back and say that was one of the most significant events in your life and you are glad it came into your life?