

God's Currency Exchange: How God Funds His Gospel Mission

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by David Schrock

Over the summer, our church considered many of the things Jesus said about money. In a [Sunday School series](#) following Randy Alcorn's *The Treasure Principle*, we learned much about how to invest our lives in things eternal. This Sunday, in our Sermon on the Mount series, we will again look at Jesus's words about storing up treasure in heaven and not on earth.

Reflecting on this passage, I am reminded of an article I read more than 15 years ago on the subject of money and how it can be and should be "converted." "Transmuted," not converted, is actually the word R.A. Torrey used in his article, "[Our Lord's Teaching about Money](#)," but converting earthly riches into heavenly gain is the idea.

This article is actually more than 100-years old now, included in the historic 12-volume set *The Fundamentals*, but the truths contained therein are just as relevant today as they were in 1909. Indeed, God's truth is eternal and his principles about all of life, including money, are evergreen. Yet, the point about converting currency into earthly treasure is one I haven't heard often, thus I share Torrey's point here.

Currency Conversion: How God Funds His Gospel Mission

In Torrey's article on money, he lists nine "laws" Jesus taught about money. Each are worth considering, but it's his final point about converting money into eternal rewards that has always stuck with me. And so I share it here:

Another law of true giving is that of *transmutation*. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" ([Luke 16:9](#)). This, though considered by many an obscure parable, contains one of the greatest hints on money gifts that our Lord ever dropped.

Mammon here stands as the equivalent for *money*, practically worshipped. It reminds us of the golden calf that was made out of the ear-rings and jewels of the crowd. Now our Lord refers to a second transmutation. The golden calf may in turn be melted down and *coined into Bibles*, churches, books, tracts, and even *souls of men*. Thus what was material and temporal becomes immaterial and spiritual, and eternal. Here is a man who has a hundred dollars. He may spend it all on a banquet, or an evening party, in which case the next day there is nothing to show for it. It has secured a temporary gratification of appetite—that is all. On the other hand, he invests in Bibles at ten cents each, and it buys a thousand copies of the Word of God. These he judiciously sows as seed of the Kingdom, and that seed springs up a harvest,

not of Bibles, but of souls. Out of the unrighteous mammon he has made immortal friends, who, when he fails, receive him into everlasting habitations. May this not be what is meant by the *true riches*—the treasure laid up in heaven in imperishable good?

What revelations await us in that day of transmutation! Then, whatever has been given up to God as an offering of the heart, “in righteousness,” will be seen as transfigured. Not only the magi’s gold, frankincense and myrrh, and the alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and the houses and lands of such as Barnabas, but fishermen’s boats and nets, the abandoned “seat of custom,” the widow’s mites, and the cup of cold water—yes, when we had nothing else to give, the word of counsel, the tear of pity, the prayer of intercession. Then shall be seen both the limitless possibilities and the “transcendent riches” of consecrated poverty.

Never will the work of missions, or any other form of service to God and man, receive the help it ought until there is a new conscience and a new consecration in the matter of money. The influence of the world and the worldly spirit is deadening to unselfish giving. It exalts self-indulgence, whether in gross or refined form. It leads to covetous hoarding or wasteful spending. It blinds us to the fact of obligation, and devises flimsy pretexts for diverting the Lord’s money to carnal ends. The few who learn to give on Scriptural principles learn also to *love* to give. These gifts become abundant and systematic and self-denying. The stream of beneficence flows perpetually—there is no period of drought.

Once it was necessary to proclaim to the people of God that what they had brought “was more than enough,” and to “restrain them from bringing” ([Exodus 36:6](#)). So far as known, this is the one and only historic instance of such excess of generosity. But should not that always be the case? Is it not a shame and disgrace that there ever should be a lack of “meat in God’s house”? When His work appeals for aid, should there ever be a reluctance to respond or a doling out of a mere pittance? Surely His unspeakable gift should make all giving to Him a spontaneous offering of love that, like Mary’s, should bring its precious flask of spikenard and lavish its treasures on His feet, and fill the house with the odor of self sacrifice!

What a thought: If the worshipers at Sinai could melt down their jewelry to make a false golden god, the reverse is true. And in the heart and mind of Jesus’s disciple, we should pray and plan, scheme and strategize ways to do just that—to convert our golden calves into treasure which can invest in the mission of God. For as Torrey notes, the gospel of the kingdom will only come to its end as the people of God invest their riches in the mission of God.

This Sunday, we’ll consider that truth again as we hear Jesus’s word in Matthew 6:19–24. Until then, let me encourage you to read the [whole article from R. A. Torrey](#), listen to the [Sunday School series on money](#), pick up Randy Alcorn’s book [The Treasure Principle](#), and pray for God to give his people hearts to give to his work.

Soli Deo Gloria, ds