

"IN GOD WE TRUST."



How the Motto Came to Be Placed on Our Coins.

Mr. Preston, director of the mint, has run down the origin of the motto, "In God We Trust," to be found on our coins. It appears that the first suggestion of such a motto came probably from W. H. Watkins of Ridleyville, Penn., who signed himself a "minister of the gospel." His letter to Secretary Chase on the subject was dated Nov. 13, 1861. Whether moved by this letter or not, Secretary Chase wrote as follows on Nov. 20, a week later, to the director of the mint in Philadelphia: "No nation can be strong except in the strength of God or safe except in his defence. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins. You will cause a device to be prepared without unnecessary delay with a motto expressing in the fewest and tersest words possible this national recognition."

As it was found that the director of the mint had no authority over the mottoes to be placed on our coins, Congress having, by a law passed in 1837, provided for them, he prepared his designs and submitted them to the Secretary. The mottoes suggested were "Our Country, Our God," and "God Our Trust." In reply the Secretary wrote: "I approve your mottoes, only suggesting * * * that the first should begin with 'Our God,' so as to read 'Our God and Our Country,' and that the motto on the shield should be changed so as to read instead of 'God, Our Trust,' 'In God We Trust.'"

An act was passed April 22, 1864, changing the composition of the 1-cent piece and authorizing the coinage of the 2-cent piece. It provided also that the devices of the coins should be fixed by the director of the mint with the approval of the Treasury. In accordance with this provision the motto "In God We Trust" was placed on the new bronze 2-cent piece. By other acts it was provided that it should be placed on certain silver and gold coins.