

IN GOD WE TRUST

The following correspondence addressed to Hon. S.P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, and dated November 13, 1861, reveals how even our coins came to be symbolic of our Christian heritage:

Dear Sir:

You are about to submit your annual report to Congress respecting the affairs of the national finances.

One fact touching our currency has hitherto been seriously overlooked. I mean the recognition of the Almighty God in some form on our coins.

You are probably a Christian. What if our Republic were now shattered beyond reconstruction? Would not the antiquaries of succeeding centuries rightly reason from our past that we were a heathen nation? What I propose is that . . . we shall have next inside the 13 stars a ring inscribed with the words "perpetual union," . . . beneath this . . . the American flag, bearing in its field stars equal to the number of the States united; in the folds of the bars the words "God, liberty, law."

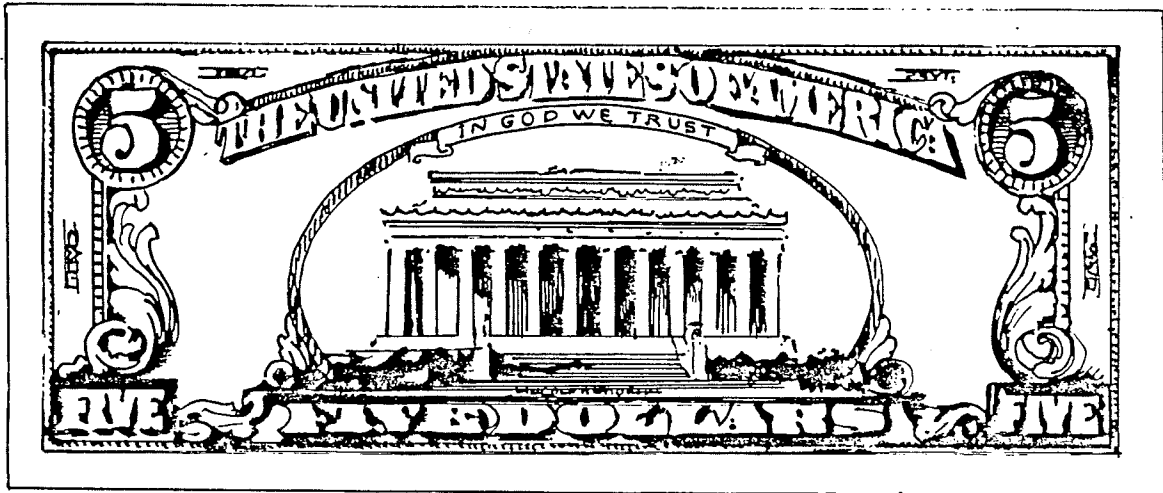
Dear Sir:

No nation can be strong except in the strength of God or safe except in His defense. 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.

Yours truly,
(Sgd.) S.P. Chase

A further letter from the Secretary of the Treasury to James Pollock, director of the Mint, dated December 9, 1863, finalizes the conviction that our nation's strength lies in Almighty God and His defense.



Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Illustrator: Maxwell Edgar.
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This would make a beautiful coin, to which no possible citizen could object. This would relieve us from the ignominy of heathenism. This would place us openly under the Divine protection we have personally claimed. From my heart I have felt our national shame in disowning God as not the least of our present national disasters.

To you first I address a subject that must be agitated.

(Sgd) M.R. Watkinson
Minister of the Gospel
Ridleyville, PA

A few days after reading its contents, the Secretary of the Treasury addressed his response to the Director of the Mint in Philadelphia, as follows:

He writes:

I approve our mottoes, only suggesting that on that with the Washington obverse the motto should begin with the word "Our," so as to read:

"Our God and our Country." And on that with the shield, it should be changed so as to read: "In God we Trust."

Thus it was that by Act of Congress, dated March 3, 1865, In God we Trust was inscribed upon our United States coins; later to be inscribed upon paper currency. The truth of its poignant message is a daily reminder to Americans where our allegiance lies: upon Almighty God and His providence (blessings) upon our land. (Excerpted from *The Christian Heritage of our Nation History Curriculum - Landmarks*, Copyright © 1997 by Catherine Millard).