

and encourage religion, science and charity, by giving the property donated to those objects, immunity from the burdens of taxation. Were not the donors of such funds justified in believing that our legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of the Commonwealth, would observe their duty in cherishing and preserving these immunities? Would not their repeal, so far as it would bring under taxation funds heretofore donated in the belief that the immunity would be permanent, savor of a breach of the public faith? »

TAXER LES BIENS RELIGIEUX C'EST TAXER LA TAXE

On me pardonnera la longueur de ces citations. Elles sont d'une extrême importance, elles s'appliquent avec beaucoup d'à-propos et de force au sujet qui nous occupe. Avant d'abandonner ce document capital, que l'on me permette d'en extraire encore quelques lignes relatives à l'exemption des édifices consacrés au culte :

« Houses of religious worship are public works for the public service. If they ever become used for any other purpose than that of religious worship, while the property thus used becomes taxable under our present laws, it never can be converted to any private emolument. No religious society can sell its house of worship and put its proceeds into the pocket of its members. Having once been consecrated to the public advancement of religion, it can never be alienated from this use. The advantages of having these houses thus employed, are in the eye of the state, somewhat different from the advantages sought by the individuals who thus employ them. To the individual, religion is an end which he seeks for its own sake, but to the state, it is a means to be used for the promotion of its highest interest. The state uses religion and favors its advancement because it is a means of civilisation, — because it helps the state forward in its own line of highest progress. Our own state constitution aptly expresses this when it declares that the public worship of God, and instruction in piety, religion and morality promote the happiness and prosperity of a people and the security of a republican government. »

Vous voyez comme ce rapport répond bien à toutes les arguties, à tous les sophismes que nous entendons répéter et