

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATURE.

The committee to whom was referred the memorial of the monthly meeting of the Society of Friends of the Eastern District of Baltimore, have to report.—That they have been upon the subject referred to them; that consideration to which appeared entitled. It appears to your committee that certain lots of land, which were purchased in 1793, and held in trust for the use of the Society called Quakers, inhabiting Baltimore town and county of Baltimore, for the purpose of a burial ground, meeting house, schoolhouse, &c. That in 1779, an actual purchase was made, and the property held for the like use of the same society, as was the lot near Baltimore town. That in 1807, a meeting of said society in and about Baltimore town, called "The Baltimore Monthly Meeting," to which meeting the property was apporportioned and the trust secured to the use of that meeting as a religious society.—That in January 1793, another similar purchase was made, and the property held for similar use of the society of Quakers.—That the ap-

proportion of the lots so held (being about four acres) exceeded the extent allowed to be taken by religious societies, by an act of the legislature, passed in 1793, which act gave permission; that such permission was granted by an act of the legislature in 1793, c. 20, enabling that Monthly Meeting as a religious society, to hold the said property.—That the members of this monthly meeting, becoming numerous, those residing in the west part of the town formed themselves into and were in 1807 established a separate meeting, and called the Monthly Meeting of Baltimore for the Western District, to which meeting were added other members called the Elkhart preparative meeting, not before belonging to either meeting, and the old Baltimore Monthly Meeting was then for the purpose of distinction, called the Monthly Meeting of Baltimore for the Eastern District.

That in 1812, c. 158, a law was passed providing for the perpetuating the trust and use for which the said property was by the act of 1793 authorized to be held, by the conveyance of the same for the like purposes to the trustees therein named, and to such others as the said Monthly Meeting should from time to time appoint. This law is asked to be so altered as to give the Monthly Meeting for the Western District an equal interest in the said property, which it is suggested would be according to the original title papers—no other intimation of the reason or propriety of such an alteration of the act of 1812 is given.—The memorialists have forbore to express any opinion whether such change be right or wrong, they appear to ask for it, because they are directed to do so by their superior meeting. The legislature is left to look to the original deeds, the act of 1793, and the times of the establishment of these monthly meetings to ascertain whether such alteration of the law ought to be made. These deeds and the acts referred to, are of the extent, and the meetings of the date herein stated; upon an attentive consideration of which it appears to your committee that this property could only be held for the use of the monthly meeting existing at the time of the purchases as the religious society capable of controlling and directing the use of it. No individual interest was or could be the object of the purchases, or of the law of 1793. And since the adoption of the present government without the aid of the act of 1793, that meeting or any other could not have rightfully exercised controul over, or directed the use of the property. The disability found in the bill of rights, rendered that act necessary, by which all benefit of the property was vested in the Monthly Meeting then existing as a religious society. The act of 1812 creates no new rights; it provides merely for the continuance and exercise of those which existed before, and all such are preserved by its letter and terms. To assign to the memorialists any specific object, it must be that the Western District Meeting should be admitted to "an equal interest in the property," with the original Eastern District Meeting. This it is suggested would be according to the original title papers—your committee think otherwise, and view it as repugnant to them; for, by these, and the act of 1793, which directs their effect, the property is clearly appropriated to the controul and use of the monthly meeting then existing as the religious society authorized to hold, and enjoy the benefits thereof. The Western District Meeting being established much longer than 1807, no semblance of right is perceived by your committee for that meeting.