

We have a national government, but the powers of that government are wisely restricted to precise objects. It is less a supreme government than a confederation. Can there be two *sovereign* powers in the same land? The most essential attributes of power still reposes in the state governments. The state legislatures are the primary assemblies of the people. To their hands is entrusted general legislative authority. They have in charge the lives, the liberties, and the property of the people. The Terra-Firma is considered the property of the state, and from which the people are said to hold.

The radical distinction between the powers of the general and those of the state governments, are, that the former is restricted from the exercise of any powers, not expressly *conferred* by the constitution.—The latter have the full exercise of all powers that are not *forbidden* in their constitutions.

It has been shown that the congresses of the revolution were simply assemblages of deputies from the several independent states of the confederation. They had no constitution, no authority but was derived from letters of instruction. In the states, reposed all political power. Even the articles of confederation or agreement, by which the first rudiments of federal connection were defined, was not assented to by the state of Maryland, until the year 1781, near the close of the revolutionary war.