

vernment. During the period when the governments under which we live took their forms from the hands of the people, the very act of moulding and forming governments to suit their conditions, necessarily rendered the community familiar with the structures they had erected. The men of that age are either gone or rapidly passing away, and with them, it is feared, much of that experimental knowledge upon the subject which the occasion so widely diffused. The generation that is rising to succeed them, are liable to take erroneous ideas upon the subject, not only from their school books, but from the highest authorities in our libraries. Already is the impression widely spread, that the state governments are merely institutions subordinate to the General Government—that the government under which we live is “*is purely national*”—that the constitution is the sure rule of political faith—that in the constituted authorities, reposes the actual sovereignty. These ideas are all erroneous and fraught with danger to our liberties.

Written constitutions are useful as land marks and boundaries, but without intelligence, and virtue, and vigilance among the people, the best would prove a broken reed to rest upon. Our general government instead of having consolidated powers, is entrusted only with special powers, and is federal rather than national in its character. Our state authorities hold and exercise the highest powers committed to govern-