

I know nothing so conducive to these important purposes as just conceptions of our individual characters. So long as our attention is taken up with the defects or excellencies of others, and the state of our own minds is overlooked; it is impossible that we can make that progress towards perfection, which is evidently our greatest interest and one of the principal ends of our present existence. I would therefore

Lastly.—Recommend self knowledge as the first step to all improvement. Here I must beg your indulgence for a few minutes longer; because the subject is not merely one of the most important, but unfortunately the least regarded by the children of men. You are all persuaded that intellectual and moral perfection does no more reside in human bosoms on earth, than angels of light do in houses of clay. How come you by this persuasion? Is it, by a discovery of the evils which exist in your own character, or by perceiving them only in the conduct of others? Man, woman, have you *seen an end to all perfection* in your own thoughts and actions, as well as in the world around you? In your estimate of human deficiencies, did you begin with *yourself*? or have you hitherto left *yourself* out of the estimate? The answer of this question is connected with all that is truly valuable in character, and with happiness in time and eternity.

In ordinary life who would neglect his own af-