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# **Sermons to Young Women**

**Fordyce James**

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**Author: Fordyce James**

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1571  
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1871

SERMONS

TO

YOUNG WOMEN.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

BY JAMES FORDYCE, D. D.

THIRD AMERICAN  
FROM THE TWELFTH LONDON EDITION.

PUBLISHED BY M. CAREY, PHILADELPHIA: AND  
I. RILEY, NEW-YORK.

1809.

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## PREFACE.

**T**HE corruption of the age is a complaint with many men who contribute to increase it. In like manner, the inattention of the people is a complaint with many preachers who are themselves to blame. A dull discourse naturally produces a listless audience; there being few hearers who will attend to that by which their hearts are not engaged, or their imaginations entertained. To entertain the imagination principally, were a poor, and indeed a vicious aim in a preacher. To engage the heart, with a view to mend it, should be his grand ambition. Any farther than as it may prove some way or other subservient to that, entertainment should never be admitted into a Sermon. There, to say the truth, we seldom meet with too much of the latter. Would to God we often met there with more of the former!

The author of the following Discourses was prompted to publish them, from an unfeigned regard for the Female Sex; from a fervent zeal for the best interests of society, on which he believes their dispositions and deportment will ever have a mighty influence; and, lastly, from a secret desire long felt of trying whether that style of preaching, which to him appears, upon the whole, adapted to an auditory above the vulgar rank, might succeed on a subject of this nature; nothing in the kind, that he knows of, having been endeavoured before, in any language. The attempt was as difficult as it was

new, and this very difficulty was probably the cause of its having been hitherto declined. He relied however on the candour of the public for every proper allowance, more especially respecting some singularities in the mode of composition, upon which he would not have ventured but for the uncommonness of the occasion. Nor has he been disappointed. But the public has not shown candour only : it has even exercised indulgence ; persons of both sexes, of various denominations, and of different tastes, having joined in expressing the most generous approbation.

Their very favourable opinion, so far beyond his expectation, affords him peculiar pleasure, as it raises his hopes, that what is here suggested may, by the blessing of Heaven, which he humbly implores, contribute to the improvement of the most agreeable part of the creation, and by consequence, both to their own felicity, and that of millions with whom they are now, or may be hereafter, connected. In this case, it will add to his happiness to reflect, that he has rendered the plain voice of truth acceptable amongst those who are daily tempted by the siren-song of flattery.

The preacher is willing to hope, that women of most conditions, and at all ages, may meet with some useful counsels, or some salutary hint, should curiosity incite them to look into these discourses. Should any of those young persons in genteel life, to whom they are chiefly addressed, deem the reprehensions they contain too severe, or too indiscriminate ; he can only say, that as all are dictated by friendship no less than by conviction, so he wishes it to be understood, that many were occasioned by a particular observation of those characters and manners which are esteemed fashionable amongst the young and the gay of this metropolis.

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In the country (a denomination which, as matters are commonly conducted, he can by no means allow to the neighbourhood of London) the contagion of vice and folly, it may be presumed, is not so epidemical. In short, he is persuaded, that women of worth and sense are to be found every where, but most frequently in the calm of retreat, and amidst the coolness of recollection.



Handwritten scribble or signature, possibly containing the letters "AG" and "th".

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*Get Wisdom, get Understanding.—Forsake her not, and she shall  
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