

the face of Jesus Christ ; and then she learned the stupendous truth that God is Love. "Is not my word like as a fire saith the Lord ; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" ? Fire penetrates. So does the word which is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword. The hammer breaks the rock. So does the word when wielded by the Spirit. Is there anything on earth more tender than the heart of a loving mother ? Is there anything on earth harder than the heart of an utterly abandoned wicked woman ? It is as hard as the nether millstone and yet even it can be broken by the hammer of the word. This was the hammer which broke the heart of the woman which was a sinner. It was the word of love flowing from the heart, pouring from the lips of a loving Saviour. What judgment, anger, scorn and contempt could not effect was brought about by the utterance of words of love. It is "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."

At another part of the narrative, after Jesus had spoken to the Pharisee of the wonderful love of this woman as contrasted with his own lack of even the common courtesies of Oriental life to his guest ; He says, "Wherefore I say unto thee that her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." Are we to understand from these words that there was anything meritorious in loving the Saviour as she did, and that He forgave her many sins on account of that love ? By no manner of means. There can be nothing meritorious in loving God. The Law takes for granted that it is a matter of duty (Matt, xxii. 37), and the