was made their loss) **the Son of God** (for  
solemnity, to shew the magnitude of the  
offence), **and putting** (**Him**) **to open shame**(they crucify Him anew, and as at his  
former crucifixion, put Him to shame before all: as Bleek strikingly says, they tear Him out of the recesses of their hearts  
where He had fixed his abode, and exhibit  
Him to the open scoffs and reproach of the  
world, as something powerless and common:  
compare ch. x. 29. It would be quite beyond the limits of mere annotation, to give any satisfactory analysis of the history of  
interpretation of this passage, and of the  
conflicts which have sprung up around it.  
Such accounts will be found admirably  
given in several of the Commentators,  
among whom I would especially mention; and for the English  
reader, Owen, who treats it at great length  
and very perspicuously. I will only mention the most notable points, and set down a few landmarks of the exposition. 1) The  
passage was used by the Montanists and  
the Novatians, in ancient times, to justify  
the irrevocable exclusion from the church  
of those who had lapsed. But 2) in the  
Catholic church, this view was ever resisted, and the Fathers found in the passage simply a prohibition against the repetition  
of baptism. And so all the ancients who  
have noticed the passage, and some of the  
moderns. 3) In later times the great  
combat over our passage has been between  
the Calvinistic and the Arminian expositors.  
To favour their peculiar views of indefectibility, the former have endeavoured to weaken the force of the participial  
clauses as implying any real participation  
in the spiritual. So Calvin himself,  
and Beza: so Owen [“the persons here intended are not true and sincere believers....for 1) in their full and large description there is no mention of faith or believing,” &c.], and recently Tait, Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But all is clearly wrong, and contrary to the  
plainest sense of the terms here used. The  
Writer even heaps clause upon clause, to  
show that no such shallow tasting is intended: and the whole contextual argument is against the view, for it is the very  
fact of these precious having veritably entered the spiritual life, which makes it impossible to renew them afresh if the  
fall away. If they have never entered if, if they are unregenerate, what possible logic is it, or even common sense at all, to  
say, that their shallow taste and partial  
apprehension makes it impossible to renew  
them? what again to say, that it is impossible *to renew again* persons in whose case no *renewal* has ever taken place? If they never have believed, never been regenerated, how can it be more difficult to  
renew them to repentance, than the heathen, or any unconverted persons? One  
landmark of exposition then must be, to  
hold fast the simple plain sense of the  
passage, and recognize the fact that the  
persons are truly the partakers of the spiritual life—regenerate by the Holy Spirit. *Elect* of course they are not, or they could  
not fall away, by the very force of the  
term: but this is one among many passages where in the Scripture, as ever from the teaching of the Church, we learn that  
*“elect”* and *“regenerate”* are not convertible terms. All elect are regenerate:  
but all regenerate are not elect. The regenerate may full away, the elect never can. 4) Again the word **impossible** has  
been weakened down to *“difficult.”* The  
readers of this commentary will not need  
reminding, that no such sense ean be for  
a moment tolerated. And this is our  
second landmark of explanation: this word  
**impossible** *stands immoveable*. But let  
us see where, and how, it stands. It  
is the strongest possible ease which the  
Writer is putting. First there is *considerable advance in the spiritual life,* carefully and specifically indicated. Then there  
is *deliberate apostasy:* an enmity to Him  
whom they before loved, a going over to  
the ranks of His bitter enemies and revilers, and an exposing Him to shame in  
the sight of the world. Of such persons,  
such apostates from being such saints, the  
Winter simply says that it is impossible to  
bestow on them a fresh renewal to repentance. There remaineth *no more* sacrifice for sin than that One which they have gone  
through and rejected: they are in the state  
of crucifying the Son of God: the putting  
Him to shame is their enduring condition.  
  
  
  
  
  
How is it possible then to renew them to  
repentance? It is simply impossible, from  
the very nature of the ease. ‘The question  
is not, it seems to me, whether man’s ministry or God’s power is to be supplied as the agent, nor even whether the verb is active