improbable, as Delitzsch well observes, that:  
the Writer should have used the word  
“*witnesses*” so closely upon “*borne witness  
to,*” ch. xi, 39, without any reference to  
that idea. See also ib. vv. 2, 4, 5, So  
that we can hardly help giving to ‘witnesses’   
a sense not confined to their” looking   
on upon us, but extending to their  
ethical condition of witnesses for the faith.  
But we may notice, that Delitzsch in contending   
for this double sense, has in fact  
a triple reference of the word to justify:  
they are *borne witness* to, they have their  
*testimony*, ch. xi, 5: and by this they  
become *witnesses*: and they carry out that  
office in being witnesses “of our conflict  
here below. And now the propriety of the  
other words used at once appears. **cloud**,  
not only an immense multitude, and that  
number as it were pressing us all around  
as the spectators did the combatants in  
the circus—but also fitly compared to a  
cloud from the fact of its being *above us*,  
they looking on from that heavenly bliss  
which they entered at Christ’s triumph. So  
that the words must be taken as distinctly  
so far implying community between the  
church triumphant and the church below,  
that they who have entered into heavenly  
rest are conscious of what passes among  
ourselves. Any interpretation short of this  
leaves the exhortation here tame and without   
point. If they are merely quasi-witnesses,   
merely witnesses in a metaphor, the  
motive, as far as this clause supplies one,  
is gone. The best note on the whole idea  
and imagery is that of Schlichting: “He  
introduces us as it were into an immense  
theatre, where a vast crowd of spectators  
has assembled, which fills all the benches  
and spaces, seeming like a dense cloud poured  
around those contending in the middle.  
Before the eyes of such a multitude, and  
so many spectators, he represents us  
contending. Now as of old such a multitude   
of spectators added courage to the  
combatants, and was a great stimulus to  
use every effort for victory: so to us also,  
so many witnesses, who also themselves  
have toiled in the same conflict, ought to  
add alacrity, and cause us to run with all  
our force the race which we have begun.  
And he calls them *witnesses*, not only in  
a figure, allusive to the spectators of a  
contest, as we have said, who are witnesses   
of the prowess of those who contend;  
but, and much more, because they witness  
concerning God and His goodness and justice,  
and all as with one mouth declare  
that God is, and is a rewarder of those  
who seek Him: that with Him, as the  
Chief Lord of the games, there is laid up  
a prize for earnest contenders: that He is  
true in His promises; that even after  
death He can render those happy who  
for His sake have given their lives. For,  
thirdly, they are specially to be understood   
in this place by the name, who by  
their blood, witness to the faithfulness and  
goodness of God. Whence they are par  
excellence called *martyrs*, i.e. witnesses”),  
**laying aside all superfluous weight** (the  
word means, *any superfluous mass or burden.*   
It is used doubtless here with direct  
reference to athletes, who before running  
trained themselves so as to get rid of all  
superfluous flesh: and also of weight  
accessory from without, as well as of  
weight carried on the person. So that the  
word may be taken of every weight of every  
kind which may weigh down the runner.  
Though, on account of what follows, I  
should understand it rather of weight *of*  
the person than weight *on* the person.  
See below), **and sin, which doth naturally  
enwrap** (the word thus rendered is used  
only here in all Greek literature, and is  
therefore somewhat difficult to interpret.  
The sum of what I have said on it in my  
Greek Test. is this, that it may best be  
understood “*easily surrounding.*” And so  
the A.V., “which doth so easily beset us:”  
and by far the greater part of expositors,  
some with, some without the sense of  
active hostility. The word being thus  
taken, the various acceptations of the  
similitude intended are well summed up  
hy Bleek: we must understand **sin** either  
us our inner propensity to sin, which clings  
fast to us, and will not part from us: or  
as a cumbersome garment girding us  
round and hindering us from running, or  
personified, as an adversary, who surrounds  
us on all sides, and waylays us to make us  
his prey; or generally, as something which  
lies about us and is ever ready to catch  
us: or which is ever from all sides standing   
in the way so as to entangle and impede  
our course. But the connexion with the  
verb, **laying aside**, which evidently Delitzsch