see below), **while the first tabernacle is  
as yet standing** (*what first tabernacle?*  
That which was first in *time*, or *first in  
order of space?* Clearly the latter, which  
has already been used in ver. 6: no reason  
can be given for changing the sense to  
the temporal one, especially as the Writer  
is regarding the whole as present, and  
drawing no contrast as to time. In fact,  
if time be regarded, the *heavenly*, not  
the earthly tabernacle is the first. Still less  
can we understand the tabernacle in the  
wilderness, as distinguished from the temple: which would yield no assignable sense.  
Bleek supposes that *the first tabernacle,*  
thus understood, symbolizes the whole  
Jewish Levitical worship which took place  
in the first or outer tabernacle: Ebrard,  
that the whole, exterior and interior tabernacle, is symbolical, the exterior of relative,  
the interior of absolute holiness. But both  
of these ideas are well refuted by Delitzsch,  
who reminds us that the first as well as  
the second tabernacle was symbolical of  
heavenly things): **the which** (viz. the first  
or anterior tabernacle, and that especially  
considered as obstructing, by its yet remaining, the way into the holiest) **is** (not,  
*“was,”* see above) **a parable for** (in reference to) **the time** (period, or season,  
with reference to the divine dispensations)  
**now present** (so Primasius,—“for what  
was then done in the temple, was a figure  
and similitude of that truth which is now  
fulfilled in the church.” And thus recently, and to my mind decisively, Delitzsch. But observe, the first tabernacle  
was not a parable *of* the present time, so  
that *the present time* should be the thing  
represented:—but **a** parable—*for*, reserved unto, or given in reference to, the  
present time,—of heavenly things, to which  
the access is in the present time revealed.

This application of the expression  
to *the time now present*, has not been the  
general view of Commentators. Chrysostom and others have interpreted it of  
the time *then* present, the time before the  
coming of Christ. But this meaning, *“the  
time which was instant,”* would not agree  
with the present tense, **are offered,** to  
which consequently those interpreters are  
obliged to do violence. Accordingly we  
have modifications of this view, e.g. that  
of Ebrard, and others, that the time meant  
is the present time of offering Old Test.  
sacrifices, in which the readers of the  
Epistle were still taking a part. “The  
author might have called the time of the  
Old Test. worship ‘the past time,’ and  
he would doubtless have so called it, had  
he been minded to speak from his own  
standing-point: but with practical wisdom  
he here speaks from that of his readers,  
who yet joined in the temple worship, and  
for whom the period of sacrifices was not   
yet passed away.” Ebrard:— that of   
Bleek, Tholuck, and Lünemann, “This  
*first tabernacle* is, or there lies in its  
establishment, a parabolic setting forth  
of the character of the present time in  
general, i.e. of the time of the Old Test.,  
—of Judaism.” Bleek. And so A.V.,  
“which was a figure for the time then  
present.” See more below under *“the  
time of reformation”*); **according to which**  
(i.e. *in accordance with which typical  
meaning;* a specification accounting for  
and justifying the profitless character  
of the ordinances about to be spoken of)  
**both gifts and sacrifices are offered** (the  
*present* implies only the matter-of-fact  
endurance of the Levitical offerings, not  
their subsistence in the divine plan), **having  
no power to perfect in conscience** (see  
below) **him that serveth** (i.e. not the  
priests, but the people, who offered through  
them. “The offering Israelite assures,  
—doing, as he does, that which God’s  
law requires,—his part, as a member, in  
the people of the law and of the promised  
salvation : he obtains also, if he does this  
with right feeling, operations of divine  
grace, which he seeks in the way prescribed: but, seeing that the Holy of holies  
is not yet unveiled, the offerings cannot  
perfect him *in conscience*, i.e. cannot put  
his moral-religions consciousness, in its  
inward feeling, into a state of entire and  
joyful looking for of salvation, so that  
his *conscience* should be an onward-waxing  
consciousness of perfect restoration,  
of entire clearing up, of total emancipation, of his relation to God.” Delituseh :