xxv. 32 ff.; Num. xxxv. 1–8; Dent. xii.  
12; xviii. 8, al.

**of the country of  
Cyprus]** For the state of © at this  
time, see notes on ch. xi. 19; 4–7,

**CHAP. V. 1–11.]** THE HISTORY OF  
ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA. This incident,  
though naturally connected with the end  
of the last chapter, forms an important  
independent narrative.

**1.] Ananias**  
signifies in Hebrew,—*The cloud of God*, or  
*The mercy of God*.

**Sapphira** is probably a Greek name   
for the precious stone  
*sapphire*.—The crime of these two is well  
described by Meyer: ‘By the sale of their  
field, and the bringing in of the money,  
they in fact professed to give the *whole  
price* as a gift of brotherly love to the  
common stock: but their aim was to get  
for themselves the credit of holy love and  
zeal by *one portion* of the price, whereas  
they had selfishly kept back the other   
portion for themselves. They wished to serve  
*two* masters, but to appear to serve only  
One.’

**3.]** The question implies the  
power of resistance to Satan, and is   
equivalent to, **Why hast thou allowed Satan to  
fill**, &c.?

**4.] Whiles it remained, did  
it not remain** (so literally) **thine own?** i.e.  
was it not in thine absolute power? **and  
when sold, was it not** (i. e. the price of it)  
**in thine own power**, to do with it what  
seemed good to thee?

**why hast thou  
conceived this thing in thine heart?**   
literally, **put this thing in thine heart**, Dan.  
i. 8; Mal. ii. 2. Satan suggested the lie,  
which Ananias ought to have repelled;  
instead of that, *he put it in his heart*,—  
placed it there where the springs of action  
are, and it passed out into an act.

**thou hast not lied unto men, but unto  
God]** This mode of expression, **not...  
but...** is not always an absolute and  
exclusive negation and assertion, see Mark  
ix. 37; John xii. 44. But here it seems to  
be so, and to imply, ‘Thine attempt to  
deceive was not to deceive *us*, men; but to  
deceive the Holy Ghost,—God, abiding in  
His church, and in us its appointed   
superintendents.’ This verse is of weighty   
doctrinal import, as proving the Deity of the  
Holy Spirit; unless it be held, that the  
Holy Spirit whom (ver. 3) Ananias   
attempted to deceive, and God to whom he  
lied, are *different*. Bengel says, “This is  
the meaning: Ananias lied to God and His  
Spirit, not to men and Peter. Dare if thou  
canst, O Socinian, to say, he lied not to  
the Holy Ghost and to Peter, but to God.”

**5.]** The deaths of Ananias and   
Sapphira were beyond question *supernaturally  
inflicted* by Peter, speaking in the power  
of the Holy Spirit. This is the only honest  
interpretation of the incident. Many,  
however, and among them even Neander,  
attempt to account for them on natural  
grounds,—from their *horror at detection,  
and at the solemn words of Peter*. But,  
in addition to all other objections against  
this (see on ver. 9.),—it would make man  
and wife *of the same temperament*, which  
would be very unlikely. We surely need  
not require any *justification* for this   
judicial sentence of the Apostle, filling as he  
did at this time the highest place in the  
church, and acting under the immediate  
prompting of the Holy Spirit. If such,  
however, be sought, we may remember that  
this was the first attempt made by Satan  
to obtain by hypocrisy, a footing among  
Christ’s flock: and that however, for wise  
reasons, this may since then have been  
permitted, it was absolutely necessary in  
the infancy of the church, that such  
attempt should be at once, and with   
severity, defeated. Bengel remarks: “That  
severity of punishment wage was inflicted