

CHAPTER 5

THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT (POST-FLOOD)

In the last chapter we studied the sad failure of those who lived in the days **before** the great flood. In this chapter we want to study those people who lived **after** the great flood. What new truths and what responsibilities did God give to these people? Did these people succeed in doing what God wanted them to do or did they fail?

The dispensation of *Human Government* extended from the end of the great flood (Genesis chapters 8-9) to the dispersion or scattering of the people at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11). [Although as we learned in Chapter 1, the principles of human government continue into the subsequent dispensations.] Let us go to the Bible and see what we can learn about this very interesting period of human history:

1. MAN'S STATE AT THE BEGINNING.

After God judged the world by sending a worldwide flood, how many people were left alive (Genesis 8:15-16,18 and compare 1 Peter 3 :20)? _____

What kind of a man was Noah? In Genesis 6:9 we learn that Noah was a J _____ (righteous) man who walked with God. In Genesis 7:1 God Himself says something about this man: "for thee (Noah) have I seen _____ before me in this generation."

Why was Noah a righteous man? What was Noah's secret? How did this man become **RIGHTEOUS**? The answer is found in the last part of Hebrews 11:7—"and (Noah) became heir of the _____ which is by _____." The righteousness which Noah had, he received **BY FAITH**. He was a man who **BELIEVED GOD** and acted upon what God had said. Did Abraham also receive his righteousness **BY FAITH** (Genesis 15:5-6)?

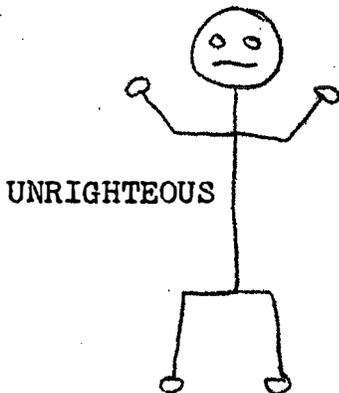
What about you? When God looks at you, does He see you as **RIGHTEOUS** or **UNRIGHTEOUS** (Romans 3:10)? _____ There is really only one person who is truly **RIGHTEOUS**. Who is the **RIGHTEOUS ONE** (1 John 2:1)?

Jesus died for our sins so that we might receive His righteousness: "For *He* (God the Father) hath made *Him* (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the _____ of God _____ Him (Christ)" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When a person believes in Jesus Christ, God then sees this person as perfectly righteous **IN CHRIST**:

The saved person who is
"IN CHRIST" (2 Cor. 5:17)

The unsaved person
outside of Christ



"There is none

no, not one!"

(Romans 3:10)



"even the _____
of God which is _____
of Jesus Christ unto all and
upon all that believe"
(Romans 3:22)

After the great flood, there were only eight people on the face of the earth: righteous Noah, his wife, his three sons and their three wives. Let us go to the Bible and see some of the things which God told these eight people after the flood:

1. God told Noah and his family that there were certain things that they could always count on. What were some of these things (see Genesis 8:22)?

Does Spring always follow Winter? Does Summer always follow Spring? Does day always follow night? Even today we can see God's great faithfulness in the seasons and in the day-night cycle. How long did God promise these things? "While the _____ remains" (Genesis 8:22). Does this promise hold true today? _____

2. According to what God told Noah in Genesis 9:2, who would be afraid of man?
_____ Was man given permission to eat animals (Genesis 9:3) _____ For a study on why God created the animals, see *Science, the Scriptures and the Saviour*, Chapter 8.
3. What did God promise that He would never do again (Genesis 9:11,15)?

_____ This does not mean that there would never be any more floods in certain areas of the world. Every year there are certain areas of the world that have local flooding. But God was saying that there would never be another *worldwide* flood which would destroy *all* men on the face of the earth.

We should also remember that Noah and his family only spoke ONE LANGUAGE (compare Genesis 11:1).

2. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.

In Genesis 8:17 we read about all of the animals that were kept safe on the ark. God's plan for these creatures was that they should "breed abundantly in the earth, and be _____ and _____ upon the earth."

God desired the same thing for mankind. God spoke to Noah and his sons and said, "Be _____ and _____, and replenish (FILL) the _____" (Genesis 9:1). Does God say the same thing in Genesis 9:7? _____ God wanted mankind to have children, multiply, spread out and re-populate the earth. Compare Genesis 1:28. Later we will see that instead of filling the earth, man tried to stay together in one location (Genesis 11).

The Responsibility of Human Government

Human life is something that God places great value upon. This is why it is such a great crime for a man to take the life of another human being by an act of brutal murder. In Genesis 9:6 God gave a wonderful law which was meant to protect human life: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, _____ shall his blood be shed: for in the _____ of God made he man."

What does Genesis 9:6 really mean? This verse teaches that THE MURDERER (the person who "sheds man's blood") MUST BE PUT TO DEATH BY MAN ("by man shall his blood be shed"). God has given man the responsibility of putting the murderer to death. Today we call this CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. Human life is very sacred: "for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6). Therefore, the person who wickedly destroys human life deserves the greatest kind of punishment.

Capital Punishment

There are many ways to punish a criminal. Circle what you would consider the greatest punishment of all:

- jail for five years
- a \$50,000 fine
- death, by the electric chair
- jail for as long as the person lives (life sentence)
- 39 lashes with a whip

There is nothing that man fears more than death (see Hebrews 2:15--death is the "King of Fears"). If you were a criminal who was thinking about killing someone, what thought would be the most terrifying to you (circle the most terrifying):

- a. If I kill this person and get caught, I will spend 20 years in jail.
- b. If I kill this person and get caught, I will be put to death on the electric chair or be hung or be executed in some other way.
- c. If I kill this person and get caught, I will be punished for one hour with a whip.

Criminals who know that they will die if caught will think twice before committing the crime!

If God had wished, He could have made Himself responsible to punish the murderer. God could have said, "If any one sheds blood (commits an act of murder), I will strike him dead!" Is God able to do this if He so desires? _____ God has no problem protecting the lives of people and He has no problem punishing those who do wrong (see Genesis 4:15). But after the flood God gave MAN this responsibility. It is man's responsibility to punish criminals. God has given HUMAN GOVERNMENT the right and the responsibility to punish criminals and to even use the greatest punishment of all--the DEATH PENALTY! This is a blessing to mankind because it does three things:

1. It punishes evildoers.
2. It prevents and deters crime (because criminals are afraid to do something that will cost them their life).
3. It protects the innocent.

Was CAPITAL PUNISHMENT something that was carried out in the days of Moses (Exodus 21:12,15,16,17)? _____ What were some of the crimes that demanded the death penalty (see the same verses)?

Even **today** it is the responsibility of the governments of the world to exercise capital punishment. We learn this in Romans 13:1-4. In Romans 13:3 we learn that human governments generally reward the good and punish the evil. If a person is a law-abiding citizen then he has nothing to fear. But if a person is a law-breaker, then he is in trouble! If a person does what is evil, then he should "be _____" (Romans 13:4). Romans 13:4 teaches us that the governmental ruler is the "MINISTER of _____." God does not directly punish criminals today. He will certainly do this in the next life. But today God has His "ministers" who do His work for Him. God has police officers and judges and governmental rulers to punish criminals. This is the responsibility of human government. And sometimes it is even necessary for the government to use "the sword" (Romans 13:4--the sword was used as an instrument of capital punishment). Today we might use other instruments for executing criminals such as an electric chair or lethal injection, etc. In different historical periods other methods were used such as hanging, the guillotine, or even death by crucifixion.

Did the Apostle Paul believe that people should be put to death if they have done something to deserve it (Acts 25:11)? _____ Did one of the criminals who died next to Christ realize that he was getting just what he deserved (Luke 23:40-41)? _____ Did the barbarians realize that murderers deserve to die (Acts 28:4 and see Chapter 4 of these notes)? _____

Actually the Bible teaches that all men are criminals and that all men are guilty lawbreakers! We all deserve the death penalty (Romans 6:23). Consider the list of sins found in Romans 1:29-31. Are you guilty of any of these crimes? _____ According to Romans 1:32, those who do such things are worthy of _____.

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ came into the world to die for guilty lawbreakers (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus was executed by the Romans even though He was innocent and perfectly sinless. But Jesus paid the death penalty and died the death that *we* deserved (Romans 6:23; Romans 5:8; and 1 Peter 3:18). The penalty must be paid, and CHRIST PAID IT! Do you believe He did this for you? Instead of God striking YOU dead, He struck His own Son dead: "Christ died for _____ sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3). He died so that we might live!

For more information see our study entitled, Capital Punishment.

3. MAN'S FAILURE.

There were eight people who survived the great flood in the days of Noah. These people carried something with them on the ark (besides the animals). It was like a terrible disease (Jeremiah 17:9--heart disease!), namely SIN! They each possessed a sinful nature which was inherited or passed down from Adam. How does Genesis 9:20-21 show the problem of sin even in the heart of righteous Noah?

Noah's family began to multiply. Noah's sons had children. Did these children have sinful hearts just like their parents? _____ Noah had many grandchildren, and then many, many great grandchildren. As years went by, the number of the original eight survivors had multiplied into thousands of people. These people stayed together and journeyed from A _____ (Genesis 8:4) where the ark had rested to the land of S _____ (Genesis 11:2) which was located on a broad plain between two great rivers (the Tigris and Euphrates), one of the most fertile regions in the whole world. They dwelt here and made this place their home.

How many different languages were spoken by these people (Genesis 11:1)? _____ One language tends to unite people; many languages tend to divide people. Suppose there were 100 people invited to a party. Some of the people speak only English, some only French, some only Spanish, some only German and some only Russian. Soon after the party begins, how many groups of people would you probably have? _____

These people who lived in Shinar decided to begin a massive building project (Genesis 11:3). There were no great stones in this area of the world, so they could not make their city out of stone. The great pyramids of Egypt and the great temples of Greece were made out of stone, but not the Tower of Babel. Even though they were without stone, these people in Shinar did have large quantities of clay from which they could make bricks and also asphalt (bitumen) which could be used as mortar or cement. Ordinarily bricks were dried in the sun, but in this case they were burned thoroughly so as to make them much harder, like stone (Genesis 11:3).

There is nothing sinful in building a building. King Solomon built a magnificent temple for his magnificent God (1 Kings 6). But these people were not building their tower for God or for God's glory. They were building a city and a tower FOR MAN, in opposition to God. They wanted to be INDEPENDENT OF GOD. They did not want to be under GOD'S GOOD GOVERNMENT. In Genesis 11:4 we learn that they wanted a city and a high tower FOR THEMSELVES and they wanted a NAME FOR THEMSELVES. What was one thing they did *not* want (Genesis 11:4)?

_____ They did *not* want to do the very thing God had told them to do (Genesis 9:1,7). Their desire was to UNITE together and build their great city so they would not be scattered throughout the earth.

4. GOD'S JUDGMENT.

The LORD knew all about these people and their city and their tower and their evil plans. The LORD said, "Behold the P _____ is O _____, and they all have _____ language" (Genesis 11:6). The LORD knew that when sinful men get together and become one (unified), there is no limit to the evil they might do! The building project was just the beginning. Unless God slows them down and **RESTRAINS THEM** (holds them back from doing evil), they would sin *more and more* and fall *deeper and deeper* into sin and go *lower and lower* into the depths of wickedness (Genesis 11:6).

What sinful things would you possibly do if there were no parents or policemen or teachers or laws or conscience to SLOW YOU DOWN? If you could get away with it and if no one would ever see you and if you were never punished, what things might you possibly do? God has given us RESTRAINTS to slow us down and keep us from doing what we otherwise might do. Think of a dangerous dog on a leash. The leash is a RESTRAINT because it HOLDS BACK. Without the leash the dog would be free to harm someone or get into trouble. Today God uses HUMAN GOVERNMENT (policemen, judges, laws, etc.) in order to RESTRAIN sinful men.

In judging the people of Babel, God performed a mighty miracle. He confounded or confused their language so that they could not _____ one another (Genesis 11:7). Suddenly there was not one but many languages on the earth (today there are about 3,000 languages). As a result the building project ceased and came to an abrupt halt and the name of the city was called _____ which means CONFUSION (Genesis 11:8-9). It is extremely difficult to work together if you are not able to communicate together. Thus the people had to go their separate ways, and they were forced to scatter and fill the earth. This is the beginning of NATIONS (see Genesis 10, especially verses 5,20,31,32). [Please note that Genesis 10 actually follows Genesis 11 chronologically.]

With many nations there is safety, because there is a balance of power and no one nation can become all powerful. When all nations unite together, then there is a great danger because all the power will fall into the hands of one wicked world leader and dictator. The Bible predicts that toward the end of the age the world will be united under one man and one government, and those who do not join this wicked system will be in danger of being put to death (see Revelation 13).

Can you think of anything in our world today that reminds us of God's judgment on Babel resulting in languages and nations? Which of these classes in school would remind you of Babel (please circle):

math
Spanish
English
geography
government
science
French
politics
history

Explain how the following would remind you of God's judgment on Babel:

missionaries (Matthew 28:19)
the King James translation of the Bible
the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11)
the United Nations
a world atlas
dictionaries
stamp collections
coins and currency from all over the world
races (red and yellow, black and white)
wars
Chinese restaurants
Italian restaurants
different customs in different lands
National Geographic, etc.

Can you think of anything taking place in our world today which is bringing us closer to a one world government as predicted in the book of Revelation? In the field of *communication*, what are some things which have served to make our world "smaller" and more unified? How has the computer and the internet helped to do this? What about in the field of *transportation*?

Is there anything wrong with world government if the right man is in power (Isaiah 2:1-5; 9:6-7; 33:22; Jeremiah 23:5-6)? _____. Is He the King and Ruler of your life? Have you put yourself under God's good government or are you trying to live your life **INDEPENDENT OF GOD**?

My Responsibility Today

Today we live not only under God's government but also under man's government. We are under the government of the United States of America. How does God expect us to live under this government?

1) *Pray for your leaders.*

The Bible tells Christians to be very careful to pray "for kings (or Presidents) and for _____ that are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Do you pray for the leaders of your country? For your governor and state leaders? For policemen and firemen and judges and school teachers? Do you pray for them that they will do their job in the right way? Do you pray that they will stand for the right and stand against the wrong? Do you pray for their salvation?

2) *Be the best citizen you can possibly be.*

As a Christian you are a CITIZEN OF HEAVEN (Philippians 3:20, where the word "conversation" means "citizenship"), but you are also a CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES. God wants you to be a good, law-abiding citizen, submitting yourself to the rulers who are over you (Romans 13:1). Good citizens usually do not need to fear being punished by those in authority (see Romans 13:3).

Is it ever right to disobey the government or to disobey man's laws? The answer is found in Acts 5:29. Peter said to the Jewish leaders of his day, "We ought to obey _____ rather than _____." This means that we must obey God *first*. A Christian must never disobey God. If those in authority over us tell us to disobey God we must never do it. If the laws of man tell us to break the laws of God (found in the Bible), then we must never do it. Obedience to God must come first.

Here are two examples of the right kind of disobedience:

1. In Daniel 6:7-9 a law was made which said that no one could pray to God for 30 days. Did Daniel obey this law (Daniel 6:10)? _____ Daniel's government said **DON'T PRAY** but Daniel's God said **PRAY!** Daniel chose to obey God rather than man! He did the right thing. Daniel also submitted to the punishment (the lion's den), even though he had done no crime, and God took care of it.
2. In Acts 4:18 we learn that the Jewish leaders commanded the Apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus. They were told not to preach the gospel any more. Did God want them to speak or not to speak (Mark 16:15)? _____ Who did Peter decide to obey (Acts 5:28-29)? _____

Most of the time Christians must obey the government, but if there is ever a choice between obeying man or obeying God, the Christian must choose to obey God.

3) Don't break the law or you will suffer.

If a person breaks the laws of the land and does what is evil, then this person should "be _____" (Romans 13:4). God has established human government for the purpose of punishing those that do evil. If you decide to break the laws of the land and be a criminal, you will probably get yourself into much trouble. You will reap what you have sown! Read 1 Peter 4:15. If you suffer for these things (murder, stealing, etc.) then you are getting just what you deserve!

Sometimes the government of a country does not carry out its responsibilities as it should. Some nations (including the United States) rarely put criminals to death even though many of them have done crimes worthy of death. Often criminals are not punished as they should be. Sometimes murderers or other criminals are even allowed to go free. Sometimes criminals are never caught. Man may fail to do the job God has given him, but we can be sure that God will never fail. Criminals may think that they have escaped punishment, but someday they must stand before the true JUDGE! No one can really get away with crime. A criminal may escape punishment in this life but can he escape in the next life (Romans 2:3)? _____ Men and rulers may fail, but God will never fail.

4) Obey Jesus Christ no matter what the cost.

Sometimes God's people suffer, not because they have done wrong or broken laws, but simply because they are living for God (see 1 Peter 4:14,16; 1 Peter 3:17). Even the Apostle Paul was put to death by the Roman government. What was his crime? Did he murder someone? Did he steal? No, Paul's only crime was that he preached the gospel and did just what Christ told him to do. If believers find it necessary to suffer for doing what is RIGHT, should they complain and cry about it (Matthew 5:10-12)? _____ Can you think of other men in the Bible who suffered and were punished because they obeyed God and did what was right? God will help His children when it is necessary for them to suffer for righteousness sake. We need to make sure that if we suffer we are suffering for WELL DOING and not for _____ (1 Peter 3:17). Suppose a Christian is caught robbing a bank. Should he be given less of a punishment just because he is a Christian? _____

Are you thankful for your government? Remember, the government is something that God has set up and established for man's good and for man's protection. Are you thankful for the country you live in? Why? Are you a part of God's kingdom (Colossians 1:13)? Are you obedient and submissive to your King? Are you a part of the United States of America? Are you obedient and submissive to the laws of the land? Are you thankful for the laws that we have? Are you thankful for policemen? Do you respect them and honor them? Are you thankful for soldiers?

Do you remember to pray for your country? Do you pray for your leaders? Do you pray that God will help you to live a godly and honest life (1 Timothy 2:2)? What are some of the freedoms you enjoy in your country that many countries do not enjoy? (**Note:** Perhaps the class could end by having a time of prayer, remembering some of these things just mentioned.)

Genesis 11

THIS is a chapter of very deep interest to the spiritual mind. It records two great facts, namely, the building of Babel, and the call of Abraham; or, in other words, man's effort to provide for himself, and God's provision made known to faith,—man's attempt to establish himself *in the earth*, and God's calling a man *out of it*, to find his portion and his home *in heaven*.

"And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. . . . And they said, 'Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'" The human heart ever seeks a name, a portion, and a centre in the earth. It knows nothing of aspirations after heaven, heaven's God, or heaven's glory. Left to itself, it will ever find its objects in this lower world; it will ever "build beneath the skies." It needs God's call, God's revelation, and God's power, to lift the heart of man above this present world, for man is a groveling creature—alienated from heaven, and allied to earth. In the scene now before us, there is no acknowledgment of God, no looking up to, or waiting on, Him; nor was it the thought of the human heart to set up a place in which God might dwell—to gather materials for the purpose of building a habitation for Him—alas! no; His name is never once mentioned. To make a name for himself was man's object on the plain of Shinar; and such has been his object ever since. Whether we contemplate man on the plain of Shinar, or on the banks of the Tiber, we find him to be the same self-seeking, self-exalting, God-excluding creature throughout. There is a melancholy consistency in all his purposes, his principles and his ways,—he ever seeks to shut out God and exalt himself.

Now, in what light soever we view this Babel confederacy, it is most instructive to see in it the early display of man's genius and energies, regardless of God. In looking down along the stream of human history, we may easily perceive a marked tendency to confederacy, or association. Man seeks, for the most part, to compass his great ends in this way. Whether it be in the way of philanthropy, religion, or politics, nothing can be done without an association of men regularly organized. It is well to see this principle; well to mark its incipient working—to see the earliest model which the page of inspiration affords of a human association, as exhibited on the plain of Shinar, in its design, its object, its attempt, its overthrow. If we look around us at the present moment, we see the whole scene

filled with associations. To name them were useless, for they are as numerous as are the purposes of the human heart. But it is important to mark, that the first of all these was the Shinar association, for the establishment of the human interests, and the exaltation of the human name,—objects which may well be set in competition with any that engage the attention of this enlightened and civilized age. But, in the judgment of faith, there is one grand defect, namely, God is shut out; and to attempt to exalt man without God, is to exalt him to a dizzy height, only that he may be dashed down into hopeless confusion and irretrievable ruin. The Christian should only know *one* association, and that is, the Church of the living God, incorporated by the Holy Ghost, who came down from heaven as the witness of Christ's glorification, to baptize believers into one body, and constitute them God's dwelling-place. Babylon is the very opposite of this, in every particular; and she becomes at the close, as we know, "the habitation of devils. (See Rev. 18.)"

"And the Lord said, 'Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city." Such was the end of man's first association. Thus it will be to the end. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces. . . . Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces" (Isaiah 8:9). How different it is when God associates men! In the second chapter of Acts, we see the blessed One coming down, in infinite grace, to meet man, in the very circumstances in which his sin had set him. The Holy Ghost enabled the messengers of grace to deliver their message in the very tongue wherein each was born. Precious proof this, that God desired to reach man's heart with the sweet story of grace! The law from the fiery mount was not thus promulgated. When God was telling what man ought to be, He spoke in one tongue; but when He was telling what He Himself was, He spoke in many. Grace broke through the barrier which man's pride and folly had caused to be erected, in order that every man might hear and understand the glad tidings of salvation—"the wonderful works of God." And to what end was this? Just to associate men on God's ground, round God's centre, and on God's principles. It was to give them, in reality, one language, one centre, one object, one hope, one life. It

was to gather them in such a way as that they never should be scattered or confounded again; to give them a name and a place which should endure forever; to build for them a tower and a city which should not only have their top reaching *to* heaven, but their imperishable foundation laid *in* heaven by the omnipotent hand of God Himself. It was to gather them around the glorious Person of a risen and highly exalted Christ, and unite them all in one grand design of magnifying and adoring Him.

If my reader will turn to the seventh chapter of Revelation, he will find, at the close thereof, "All nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," standing round the Lamb, and, with one voice, ascribing all praise to Him. Thus the three Scriptures may be read in most interesting and profitable connection. In Genesis 11, God gives various tongues as an expression of His *judgment*; in Acts 2, He gives various tongues as an expression of *grace*; and in Rev. 7, we see all those tongues gathered round the Lamb *in glory*. How much better it is, therefore, to find our place in God's association than in man's! The former ends in glory, the latter in confusion; the former is carried forward by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the latter by the unhallowed energy of fallen man; the former has for its object the exaltation of Christ, the latter has for its object the exaltation of man, in some way or other.

Finally, I would say, that all who sincerely desire to know the true character, object and issue of human associations, should read the opening verses of Genesis 11; and, on the other hand, all who desire to know the excellency, the beauty, the power, the enduring character of divine association, should look at that holy, living, heavenly corporation, which is called, in the New Testament, the Church of the living God—ment of the human interests, and the exaltation of the human name,—objects which may well be set in competition with any that engage the attention of this enlightened and civilized age. But, in the judgment of faith, there is one grand defect, namely, God is shut out; and to attempt to exalt man without God, is to exalt him to a dizzy height, only that he may be dashed down into hopeless confusion and irretrievable ruin. The Christian should only know *one* association, and that is, the Church of the living God, incorporated by the Holy Ghost, who came down from heaven as the witness of Christ's glorification, to baptize believers into one body, and constitute them God's dwelling-place. Babylon is the very opposite of this, in every particular; and she becomes at the close, as we know, "the habitation of devils. (See Rev. 18.)"

Genesis to Deuteronomy
by C.H. Mackintosh