



CIVILIZATION
FOR MODERN TIMES

Civilization for Modern Times

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THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION PRESS

Washington 17, D. C.

1955

Nihil Obstat

John J. Moore, S.M.

Censor Deputatus

Imprimatur

Patrick A. O'Boyle

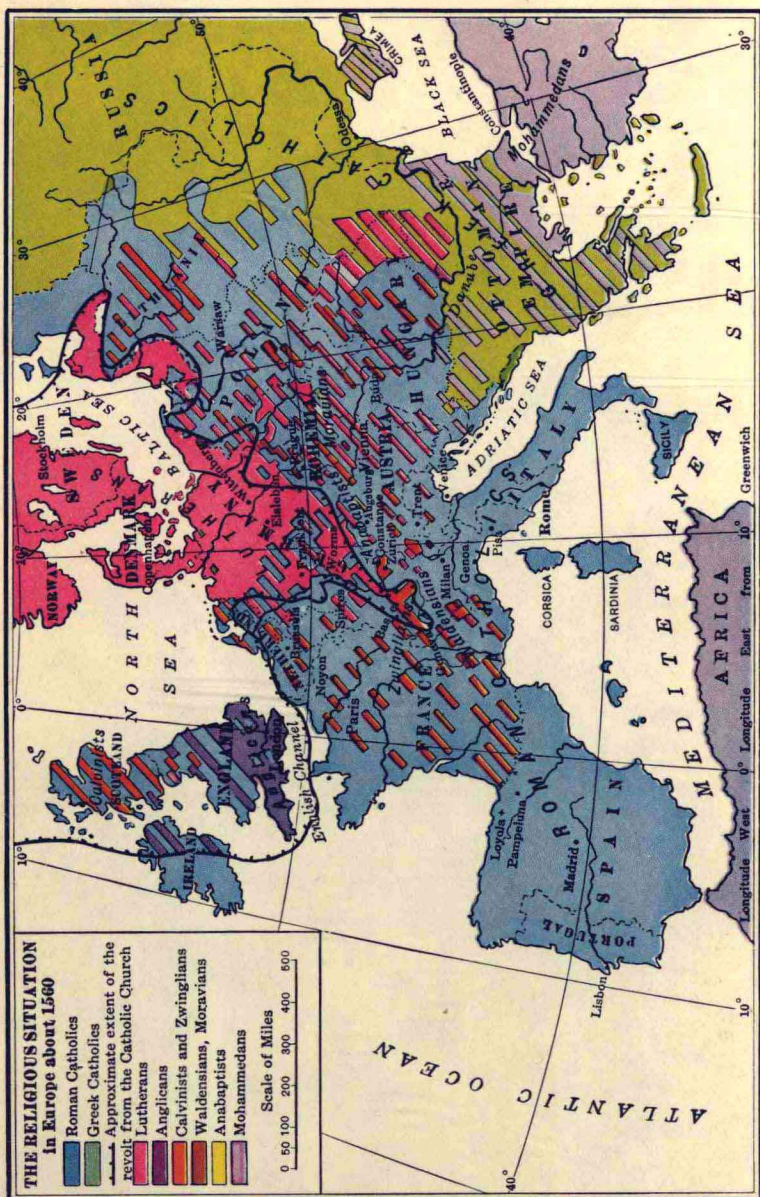
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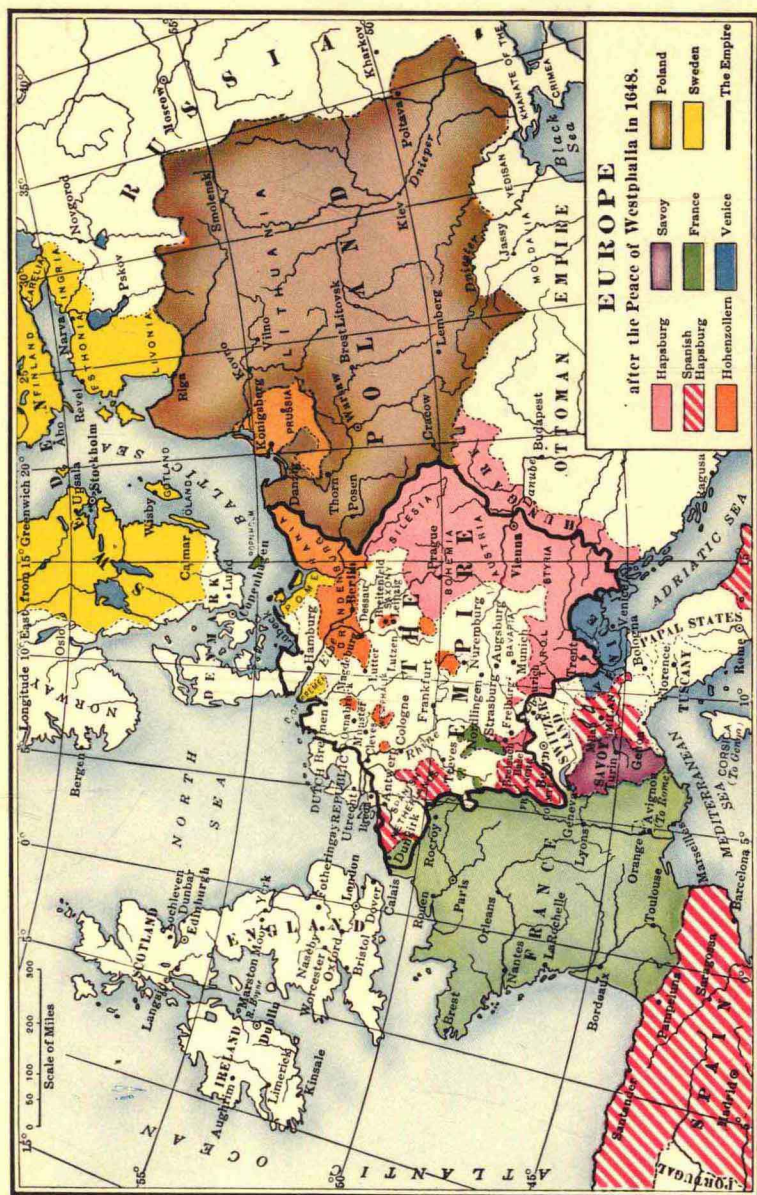
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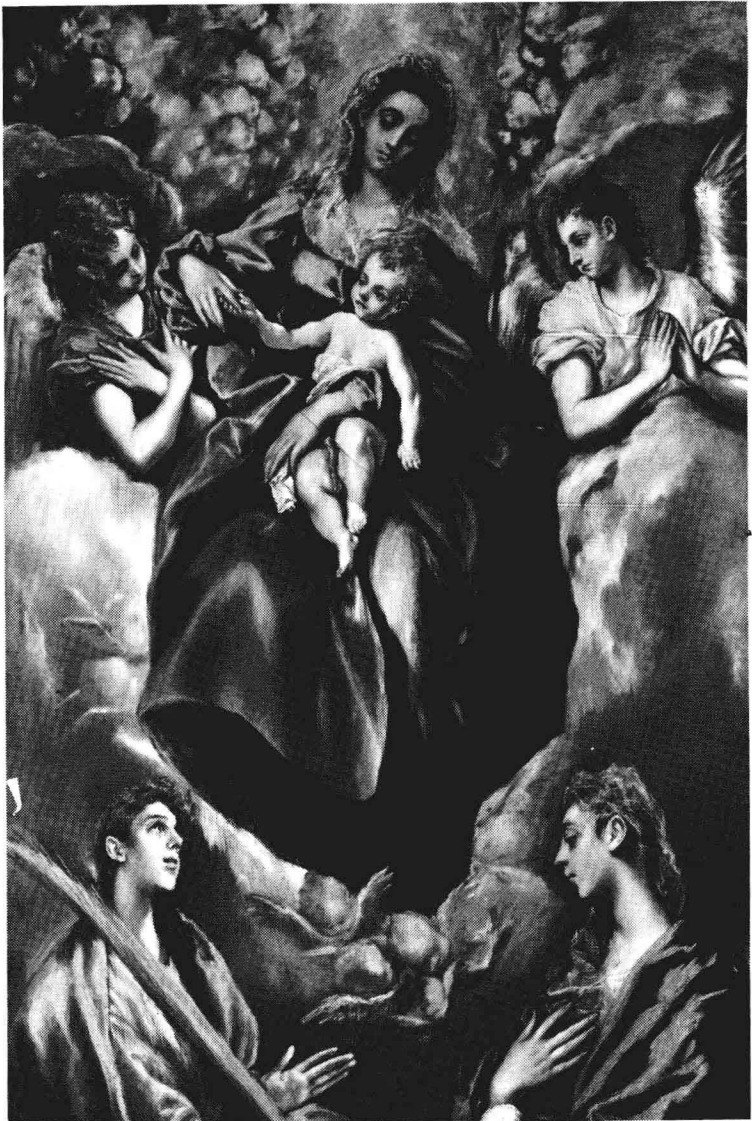
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THE VIRGIN WITH SAINTS

El Greco

Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the Assumption on November 1, 1950. "We . . . are confident that this solemn proclamation will contribute in no small way to the advantage of human society . . . Thus, while the illusory teachings of materialism and the corruption of morals that follows from these teachings threaten . . . to ruin the lives of men by exciting discord among them, in this magnificent way all may see clearly to what a lofty goal our bodies and souls are destined."

FOREWORD

Civilization for Modern Times is an appropriate title for this book of world history by Father Nicholas A. Weber and Father John Lloyd White, for it is a panorama of the social stirrings of the past that have affected the present.

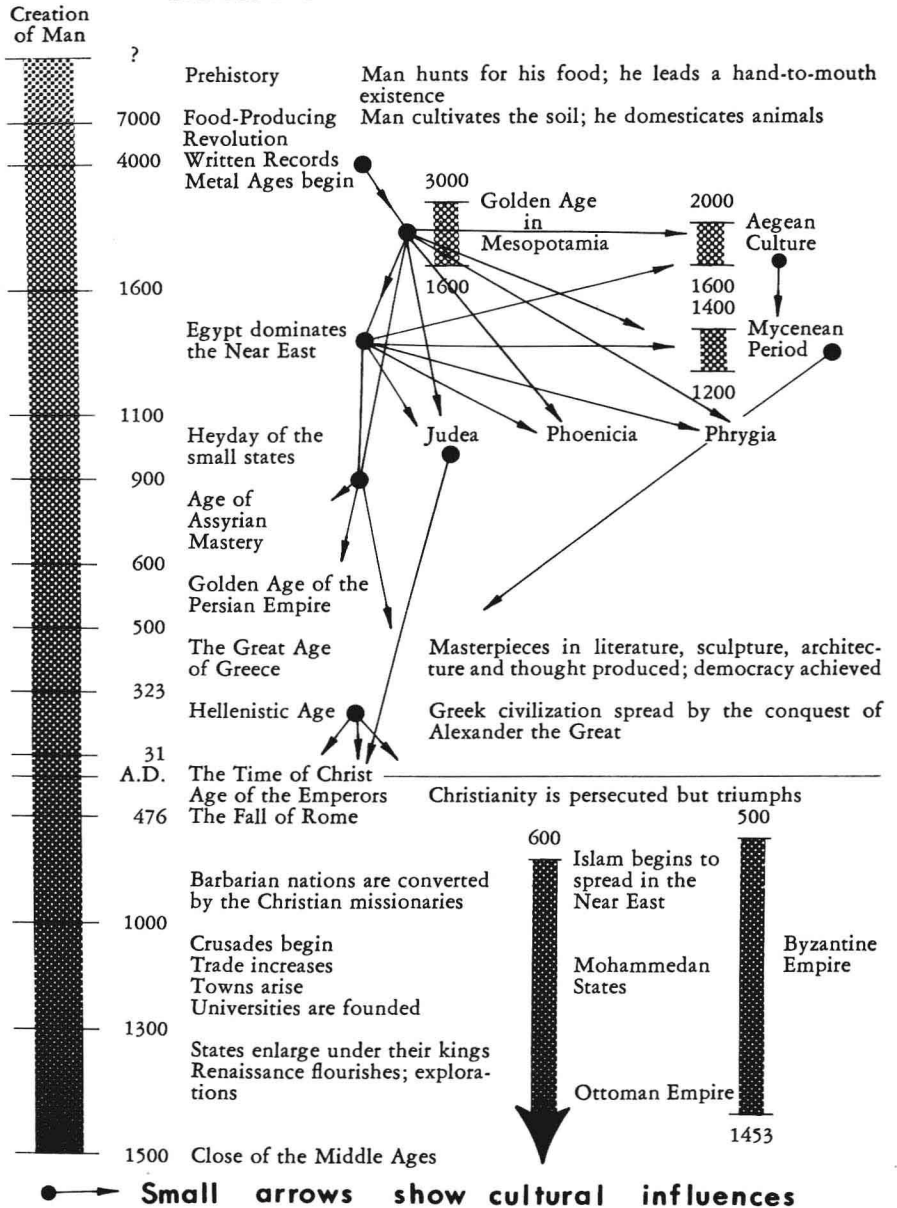
A modern and forceful approach to history, the narrative is more than a chronological explanation of dates and dynasties; it is a careful analysis of contributions of peoples to the generations that followed. Darkened down the long roll of time by political calamities of heresy and tyranny, *Civilization for Modern Times* is brightened by man's sense of morality.

Fronting the National Archives of the United States are the words carved in stone, "What is past is prologue." Therein lies the keynote of this book, for, out of the tumultuous past, *Civilization for Modern Times* projects the responsibilities of men and governments to hold for the future the concepts of law and justice that are the fortifications of Christian social living.

MARY SYNON, LL. D.

The Catholic University of America,
Washington, D. C.,
January 2, 1955,
The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

THE FLOW OF TIME TO THE MODERN PERIOD



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I. *Yesterday and Today*

1. MANKIND AND HISTORY

THE CHIEF CIVILIZATIONS

The Challenge of Modern Times. History illuminates the past. It can also enlighten the present. The modern age faces problems which must be solved. History can give us the key to their solution. It shows us that the human race cannot keep its freedom of spirit if the interests of man's soul are neglected. Man has passed from a crude state of existence into one marked by ever-increasing knowledge, comfort, and control over natural resources. Fifty years ago, no one dreamed of atomic energy; seventy-five years ago, only the visionary thought of flying; one hundred years ago, the automobile was not even considered possible. Now, these discoveries are commonplace. Each generation has built upon the accomplishments and inventions of past generations.

In material affairs, the path of the human race throughout the ages has generally been one of progress. Yet history has shown that material progress does not necessarily bring peace and happiness. Man's spiritual progress has not kept pace with his other achievements. History warns the citizens of tomorrow to heed this lesson of the past.

Western Civilization. When a group of people has firmly advanced in living conditions, government, thought, and religion, a civilization comes into being. In the modern world there are five historical civilizations: (1) the Western, (2) the Eastern-European, (3) the Mohammedan, (4) the Hindu, and (5) the Sino-Japanese. The dominant civilization today is the Western. It has spread to the ends of the earth and has greatly influenced the lives of men belonging to other civilizations. It was born in the Middle Ages and was formed by Catholic Christianity from the ancient culture of the Near East, Greco-Roman civilization, and elements of German barbarian life. It grew with the indelible mark of belief in the One, True God of Revelation upon it.

The social principles of Christianity governed the rapid development of Western civilization. These principles are:

- (1) The dependence of man upon God.
- (2) The individual dignity of the human person.
- (3) The social nature of man.
- (4) The sacredness and integrity of the family.
- (5) The dignity of the worker and his work.

- (6) The material and spiritual interdependence of all men.
- (7) The obligation of all men to use the resources of the earth according to God's plan.
- (8) The obligation of men to share nonmaterial goods with one another.
- (9) The obligations of justice and charity that exist between peoples and nations.
- (10) The unity of all men.

The rise of the West is the main theme of modern history. Recent times have been marked by attacks against these tenets of Christianity. The crises in Western civilization have been caused by the abandonment, in whole or in part, of these principles. Communism, which denies the existence of God, represents the greatest challenge to the western world today.

Other Civilizations. In this textbook, we will also study the other four civilizations. They are important, because they are still existent and have exerted a profound influence upon the growth of our own culture. Russia is rooted in the culture of eastern Europe. Mohammedan civilization, under the militant leadership of the Ottoman Empire, threatened to engulf Europe at the beginning of the modern era. India, the center of Hindu culture, has recently achieved its independence after a few centuries of British control. In the Far East, Japan quickly rose to the position of a world power during the last century but became the victim of its military leaders and failed to fulfill its early promise. China is now in the focus of world affairs as one of the foremost leaders of militant Communism. The boundaries between civilizations are not distinct. Their limits overlap. Improvements in transportation and communication have bound all parts of the world into a closer unity. One culture influences another more than ever before. For example, events in the Far East can have an almost immediate effect upon our own home life. It is important that we learn how this state of affairs arose. The study of modern history will unfold the story to us.

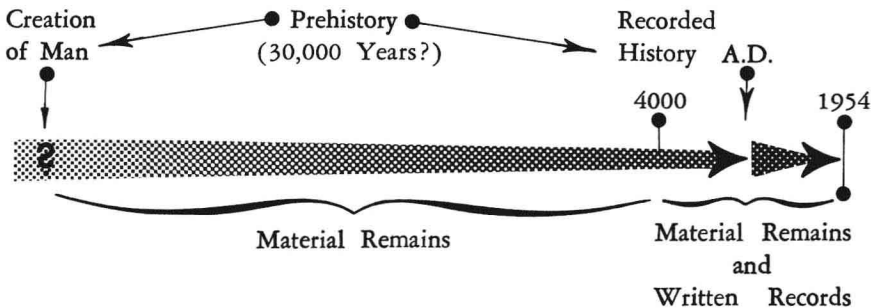
Religion and Civilization. Religion tells man about his Maker, why God created him, and how he can achieve his goal in life. It answers the most important questions of existence. Religion has always had a deep influence upon the growth of civilization. *Religion is the soul of culture.* It determines the human being's outlook on the universe. Widespread changes in religion mean profound changes in civilization. For this reason, modern times date from the Protestant Revolution. In the sixteenth century, western Europe underwent a religious upheaval. The effects of this disturbance remain with us today. The movement begun by the so-called reformers helped to weaken belief in God, cast doubt on the mission of Christ, and, in general, turned man's attention from the next life to the material attractions of the present one. The pretended reformers did not intend these consequences. They

vainly claimed to improve the handiwork of God, but they deformed the course of civilization instead of reforming it. Such always happens when man refuses to listen to the divinely inspired voice of Christ's Church.

HISTORY

The Record of Mankind. How can we trace the rise of a civilization? Each of us can remember happenings in his own life, but does mankind have a memory? In what way and by what means can we reconstruct the picture of the past? *History is the story of what men have thought, said, and done in building a civilization.* This story can be told when we have and understand the *records* of man's thoughts, sayings, and doings. The moment that man first appeared on earth is unknown. What we know of him in very early times is limited and scanty compared to our knowledge of him in later ages. The reason is that we have no written records for the early period. Only tools, weapons, ornaments, dwelling places, and bodily remains can give us a picture of his primitive way of life. Such is the evidence we must rely on for the *prehistoric period*, the thousands of years before man invented writing. The *historic period* takes in the rather brief span of human existence from the introduction of writing to the present day. After writing became widespread, the sources of information on human activities grew more plentiful. Unwritten evidence remains valuable for all periods. Buildings, monuments, and other material remains illustrate the written account for us. For example, our government sometimes restores and preserves the homes of its famous statesmen, so that you and I might see how our country's heroes once lived.

The main ideas just stated may be illustrated by the following diagram:



How to Appreciate History. Civilizations are made by men living together in certain areas on the earth and at definite times. Place and time are the anchors of people and events. Geography, *the description of place*, and chro-

nology, *the reckoning of time*, have been rightly called the "two eyes of history." To know history truly, we must have a clear idea of geographical conditions. In the last century, for instance, the scramble for natural resources in undeveloped lands often led to ill feeling and friction between the great nations. Since history studies what has developed in time, the student should know the *sequence of events*, or *what followed what*. He must grasp the chronological arrangement of the course.

History is not only a review of changing conditions but also the story of people. The role of the iron industry and that of Josef Stalin in modern times may each in its own way be instructive. For example, economic conditions, political elements, and strong leaders combine to answer the question, "Why did Russia turn to Communism?" At one time, history was mainly concerned with wars, diplomacy, laws, and governments. These are important parts of man's story but they are not all of it. The entire life of a people must come within the scope of our study: their home life, their education, their beliefs. Whatever is of interest or importance in the growth of a people falls within the boundaries of history.

2. A GLANCE BACKWARDS

The nations of today were by no means the pioneers of human civilization. Before anyone in Europe could read or write, half of the period of recorded history had already passed. The Near East—Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Crete, and the shores of the Aegean Sea—were the scenes of civilized activity while Europe was still a land of savages. We owe a great debt to the Near Eastern cultures, just as we have inherited much from the Greeks and Romans. Modern times stem from a period of a thousand years called the Middle Ages which followed the break-up of the Greco-Roman world. The Middle Ages could be called the parent of the modern world, because that epoch left to us a considerable legacy of thought, art, government, and, above all, Christianity.

MAN'S MIND IS INVENTIVE

Tools of Prehistoric Man. Ages ago, the secret of the use of metal was hidden from man. His ingenuity, however, taught him how to use stone materials as tools. He began chipping flints into crude hatchets, knives, and the like. The knifelike implements shown here are of two kinds. The three darkest pieces are made of obsidian, a glassy volcanic substance. The rest are of ordinary flint.

Doorsocket From Nippur. One of the earliest sites of a highly developed civilization was Nippur, in Mesopotamia. Writing is one of the inventions that marks man's entry into civilization. Cuneiform, such as is pictured on this doorsocket, was the type of writing used by Mesopotamians. The wedge shaped characters gave cuneiform its name, for *cuneus* is the Latin for "wedge."

Our story of the modern world would be misleading if we did not first survey the contributions of earlier civilizations.

THE BACKGROUND OF OUR CIVILIZATION

Before History. Man took the first solid step toward civilization when he began to cultivate crops and domesticate animals. He thus gained for himself a steady and increasing food supply. Before this, he had lived a day-to-day existence, gathering what food he could as raw nature provided it. He had to be satisfied with the chance offerings of a wild and untamed world. Once he began to farm, he established control over the food-producing earth. Now he could abandon his hand-to-mouth existence and store up surpluses for the lean future. Men entered a new era.

Tools Improved. After this food-producing revolution, we find widespread use of pottery. The preparation and storage of food demanded vessels that would stand heat and hold liquids. The clay pot has been called "the tin can of the ancient world." Population increased and men organized themselves into better regulated communities. A division of labor was introduced. Some villagers became farmers, while others became craftsmen, such as pottery-makers and carpenters. Trade grew. Towns sprang up.

Foundations were laid for more rapid progress. A number of inventions helped to bridge the gap between barbarism and civilization. Notable among these were: the *canal* and the *dam*, so necessary for the irrigation of crops; the *wheel*; the *sailboat*; the *use of metals*; and *writing*. The earliest civilizations of the Near East developed in the Age of Metals.

Writing ushers us into the era of recorded history. This discovery promoted social and political organization. The ruler could now control a much larger area of land. He could send written orders to his agents in the far quarters of the country. Reports sent back to him described the condition of distant

EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

The Pyramids at Giza. The world-famous pyramids show the great political power, organization, and engineering skill of ancient Egypt. They tell us that the Egyptians were a religious people, believing in a life after death. The pyramids were immense tombs built to house the embalmed remains (mummies) of Egyptian kings (Pharaohs). Their shape suggests a ray of the sun, chief god of the Egyptians.

The Coffin of Tutankhamen. This coffin, shaped to the king's features, is made of wood coated with gold. The discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb (1922) gave us a new store of knowledge in the culture and life of ancient Egypt.

Scenes from Egyptian Life. These mural paintings of the ancient city of Thebes show us Egyptians plucking grapes and treading the wine press. The lower part of the panel gives us a picture of how they snared birds and dressed them for food.

towns and districts. Written records also aided the growth of trade and helped to transmit knowledge from one age to the next. Because of writing, we know the chief actors in the drama of history by name as well as by deed.

Contributions of the Near East. The first great civilizations sprang up in river valleys where rich soil and abundant water supply produced good crops. The valleys of the Nile River in Egypt and the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia (Babylonia) were important centers of progress. To the early Babylonian peoples and the Egyptians, we owe the beginnings of medicine, mathematics, astronomy, art, architecture, standard weights and measures, and highly organized government. The Code compiled by Hammurabi, a king of Babylon (1728-1686 B. C.), is the first notable system of a nation's law in history.

The Hebrews first taught the world the true nature of the Divinity. God is *One* and He created the universe from *absolutely nothing*. The *moral law of justice and truth* governs the deeds of *all men*, and, according to this law, the actions of man are to be judged *right* or *wrong*. This law is the *expression of God's will*, and each human being is obliged to submit to it.

The Arameans and the Phoenicians were the first prominent commercial peoples. Business was their life. The Phoenicians dotted the shores of the Mediterranean Sea with their trading posts, while the Arameans dominated the arteries of trade on land. The alphabet probably began with the Semitic peoples of the Sinai Peninsula, but the Phoenicians are famous for popularizing and spreading it.

The Assyrians, who developed in an atmosphere of strife and war, were the first militarists of history. They raised warfare to a science. They had splendidly managed armies. They also introduced us to *rule by terror*. Conquered peoples were sternly governed. Whole communities were rooted out of their homelands and settled elsewhere, our first instance of deportations in history. Although the Assyrians made little original contribution to culture, they were greatly interested in the past. Their clay tablet libraries, filled with translations of older documents, are some of our richest sources of ancient Near Eastern lore.

THE HEBREW PROPHETS

A clear idea of man's duties to his Creator was unknown among all ancient peoples except the Hebrews. By a special revelation, Almighty God kept the light of true religion burning among His people. He raised up prophets in their midst to be His spokesmen. *Jeremias* warned his people that there is but one God and it is through the observance of the moral law that man can serve and please Him. *Daniel* foretold much about the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. *Joel* stressed the value of prayer and penance.

The Persians established the first world empire, a masterpiece of orderly government. In the center of administration was the Persian king, ably helped by the Persian nobles in the task of ruling. A splendid network of roads bound the empire together. Over these sped the royal couriers in season and out of season, keeping the far-flung districts in close contact with the monarch. Trade benefited from the peace that reigned over the land. A standard coinage and uniform weights and measures promoted business. A canal from the Red Sea to the Nile River was opened in the interests of commerce. A sea route was discovered from Suez to India, and caravans went overland even to China.

GREECE AND ROME

The First Westerners. The Greeks made up a very small part of the ancient world. The time span of their greatest age was short. Yet their culture still forms a large part of our own. The Greeks were the first modern men. With the exception of the Hebrew contribution, their civilization probably has been the most influential in history. Their literary and artistic works, their science and thought, their political institutions, and even their athletic games can be easily appreciated by us, because they are still a part of our own way of life. There is scarcely a city in the United States in which the courthouse, post office, or bank does not imitate Greek architecture in some form or fashion. We can look at the statues which the Greeks carved or the temples they built and link these works with the creations of a modern artist.

The Greeks, then, were as gifted a people as the human race has ever produced. From about 900 to 500 B.C., they went from near savagery to the heights of culture. They absorbed the learning, the mathematics, the astronomy, the medicine, the arts, and the crafts of the East and improved on everything they learned. Their statues show their idea of what man ought to be—an orderly, well-balanced, beautiful creature, the master of himself and of his feelings. Their buildings, such as the Parthenon, were noted for their exactly measured corners and orderly rows of columns. The same beautiful pro-

THE ROMAN FORUM

Greco-Roman Civilization. One of the chief sources of modern culture stems from the ancient Greeks and Romans, who, in turn, were influenced by previous civilizations. The Romans built up a world empire and, through it, spread abroad the cultural heritage of the Greeks. The Romans themselves were great organizers and administrators. Notice how the forum bustles with activity. Yet the insets show how the Romans depended on the advances of other peoples. Inset one pictures columns from the temple at Luxor built by the Egyptians, the first great architects in stone. Inset two shows the Greek temple of Theseus. It is a fine example of columnar construction. Compare it with the buildings in the Roman Forum.