

Loss of Faith in America

Jim Nelson Black

The seeds of rebellion that fell on European soil during the Enlightenment blossomed in America during the 1960s. For the radicals of France, the aim was liberation from the authority of the Church and the Crown. The Hippies sought liberation from rules of every kind and spent their days in search of “sex, drugs, and rock and roll.” In both cases the provocation and source of rebellion was the same: **rejection of the God of the Bible.**

The *philosophes* of the 18th century, including Voltaire, Rousseau, and a dozen or so radicals of the day, identified themselves as “new men” because they wanted to break completely with the customs and traditions of the past. In particular, they set out to cast off their heritage of faith. By the same measure, the children of the sixties set out to wage war on “establishment values” and to fight for the right to say and do things their mothers and fathers would have considered taboo. Like their European precursors, the aim of Hippies was to establish a “new order of the ages,” but unlike them, their attack was aimed at the heart of the most charitable and democratic society on earth.

The sixties’ radicals were “counter-culture” warriors in every way. Their language, behavior, and appearance were calculated to offend and intimidate. They had a passionate hatred for “middle-class values,” and despite their generally affluent childhoods, they had no love for the ethical restraints of those, like their

parents and professors, who populated civilized society. Hippies, Weathermen, Black Panthers, and the communist-backed Students for a Democratic Society were not motivated, as they claimed, by a desire to improve the system. They wanted to destroy it completely. They were latter-day progeny of Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, whose writings had taught them the language and methods of nihilism. As their behavior and their choices of targets demonstrated only too well, they were committed to anarchy and to abolishing the symbols and substance of the authority that stood in their way.

The rebellion had a spiritual component as well. They scoffed at America’s Judeo-Christian heritage, turning instead to Native American religions, metaphysical cults, yoga, the Chinese *I Ching*, *Zen* and Tibetan Buddhism, and the worship of the earth goddess, Gaea. To these they brought an obsession for drugs, free love, living together in communal arrangements, and the elimination of every trace of middle-class morality. The young leftists of Haight-Ashbury, Woodstock, and Altamont fully expected to overthrow the Christian religion and bring paganism back to America.

A New Moral Order

In a recent article for *National Review Online*, former Marine captain Mackubin Thomas Owens offers a fitting assessment of the era. He says that Americans tend

to have two very different views of the sixties. The first, held by people on the left, like California Democratic politician Tom Hayden, believes the sixties were a watershed for the human spirit, a time of noble activism and idealistic self-sacrifice. Hayden once said, “We of the sixties accomplished more than most generations in American history.” His statement may be true, but certainly not in the way he meant it.

The second view comes much closer to the truth, however. It believes that the sixties were “a time of incredible intellectual flatulence, when pretentious adolescents under the tutelage of Herbert Marcuse and the like, affected a pose of moral superiority vis-a-vis their countrymen.” It was a time, he says, “when the pampered and narcissistic children of privilege spouted Marx, Guevara, and Fanon and engaged in no-fault acting-out. It was a time when self-styled radicals embraced the enemy against whom their countrymen were fighting and dying.”¹

The nihilism at the heart of sixties radicalism attempted to cast murderers like Charles Manson and Black Panther thugs like Huey Newton as revolutionary—a fraud that was exposed with incisive candor by two refugees of the sixties, David Horowitz and Peter Collier, in their book *Destructive Generation*.² But no matter how noble the radicals pretended to be, what they were actually promoting was the tortured logic of the Enlightenment. The object, from the very beginning, was to undermine the moral and intellectual framework of the nation, and in all fairness, they and the legions they have cozened over the past forty years have succeeded very well.

The celebration of vulgarity and

vice among a small bands of dissidents in the sixties has spread throughout the nation. It has been adopted by the music industry and the popular media as their preferred mode of behavior.

The dividend of this attitude is being paid today, not just among the privileged children of the rich, but by our own children and, more ominously, by those in our society who lack the resources and self-discipline to cope with the consequences of such behavior.

In an analysis of the decline of moral values in American society and the impact it is having on those within the Welfare community, columnist and novelist Joe Klein says:

It is impossible, of course, to pinpoint the precise moment when moral relativism became acceptable public policy—but in the sixties, the structures of moral authority were systematically removed from the poorest neighborhoods. A series of legal judgments made it harder for teachers to discipline their students and for housing projects to screen their tenants; the cop on the beat was seen as an occupying force and removed. The moral consequences of programs like welfare were never considered. Instead of nurturing virtue, popular culture celebrated intemperance—and intemperance, as Adam Smith pointed out 200 years ago, may addle the rich, but it devastates the poor.³

The enormous costs brought about by this conflict have brought great hardship and compounded the problem for those involved in intervention and rescue. **Just**

as forest fires and floods have changed the physical landscape in recent years, the storm of immorality is sweeping the land and changing the moral horizon for our society.

Escalating America's Breakdown

As mentioned above, one of the gurus who provoked the mischief of the sixties was a German-born philosopher and Berkeley professor named Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse wrote voluminously and laid out an agenda for undermining the capitalist system of the West. Long before the environmental movement became mainstream, Marcuse proposed a radical environmentalism. He encouraged the rebirth of the women's movement and an all-out assault on Judeo-Christian morality. He saw the value of homosexuality and lesbianism in shocking and shaking the culture, and he was critical of the nuclear family. As an avowed Marxist, his purpose was the utter defeat of capitalism.

"If the New Left emphasizes the struggle for the restoration of nature," he said, "if it demands a new sexual morality, the liberation of women, then it fights against material conditions imposed by the capitalist system and reproducing this system."⁴ Art and fashion, he said, are ideal tools of the revolution. He called for an assault on the English language, and the use of profanity and obscenity to desecrate everyday speech. The use of sexualized curse words was especially important, he said: "It turns easily against sexuality itself" and is a debasement of human intimacy. Slang and violent, loud, vulgar rock music were useful tools in undermining the culture. Sadly, by the

time he died in 1979, all of these invasions were well under way.⁵

The moral bankruptcy of America over the past thirty years has been our national shame. It has made us a disgrace in the eyes of the world. We know now that the anger and bitterness of Muslim nations toward this country derives in large part from this grinding down of morality and culture through the media, the movies, and the lifestyles popularized by global forums such as MTV. No one, of course, defends the use of terror of any kind to execute moral judgment; but we cannot help but see that America's loss of modesty and self-restraint has provoked outrage and resentment around the world.

The price we are paying for the coarsening of culture that began in the sixties and seventies is much too high, and now it has spread to many other areas. Progressive education, with its socialist roots, has devastated the public schools and anesthetized the minds of America's children. Leftist professors have filled the heads of our next generation of leaders with the politically correct dogma of "diversity, tolerance, and moral relativism." **Racism, sexism, tribalism, and social disintegration have actually been encouraged in the name of diversity, while pride of country is attacked as "jingoism."**

Added to this, the justice system, as we have seen, is anything but just. Too often, the courts reward offenders and punish the victims of crime. Sentencing and parole standards are arbitrary and erratic and, predictably, the level of respect for law and order among most Americans has plummeted in recent years. In virtually every area, our founding principles based on freedom, individualism, and

personal responsibility are being systematically replaced by social programs based on collectivism and a submission to centralized authority more suitable to Soviet Russia than to a free democratic society.

The Price of Sexual Sin

The mindset of the sixties is still with us, as values and beliefs that were once cherished in this nation are being discredited by the left. Francis Schaeffer believed that we are living in the post-Christian age. Obviously, a large number of Americans still cherish our Christian heritage, and faith is still strong in many places. **But for a growing number, the enlightenment view of reality has become their accepted worldview. For them, moral consensus no longer depends on Christian truths, but on secular values.**

Our interpretation of man's place in the cosmos is known as our "worldview." Like the operating system on a computer, a worldview provides the rules, the language, and the framework for managing and sharing information. It tells us how things work, and the first concern of any worldview is the nature of life. It involves questions like, "Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?" These questions were not invented in some laboratory. They are questions that everyone must ask at some point in their lives in order to deal with the basic demands of day-to-day existence.

We don't have to look very far to see that things are not perfect in this world. There is pain and loss and suffering; so we also want to know, "What has gone

wrong with the world? Why is there pain? Why is there evil?" and, as Rabbi Harold Kushner asked in his famous book a few years ago, **"Why do bad things happen to good people?" The Bible gives us the answer. Original sin. It's very simple, really, but the humanist worldview refuses to accept this answer.**

For the humanist, evolution provides the explanation for where we came from; social and environmental factors tell us what is wrong with the world; and solutions for the problems in society are merely technological concerns that man, through his ingenuity and powers of deduction, can overcome. There is no doubt that postmodern thinking has begun to play a dominant role in contemporary culture. It has brought with it a form of moral relativism that allows for every kind of personal expression, just so long as it is not encumbered by moral judgment. For secular humanism, absolute truth and morality do not exist; they are merely concepts left over from our ancient past.

Here we discover the roots of the sin and disharmony that have turned our culture upside down. **D. James Kennedy has called the twentieth century a "century of seduction." For the past forty years, he says, "the American people have been seduced by a whole series of siren singers who have led them down the primrose path," and the primary agents of this seduction have been the perversion of truth, the debasement of sexuality, and the assault on the sanctity of life.**

Theologian F. B. Meyer has written that sensuality (or unchastity, as he called it) can destroy a nation. He says, "There is no sin which will sooner bring about a

nation's fall. If history teaches anything, it teaches that sensual indulgence is the surest way to national ruin. Society, in not condemning this sin, condemns itself." While a segment of the population recognizes that continued toleration of immorality and sexual deviance can only lead to ruin, the liberal idealists who set the pace of the secular culture are leading the way, not just to tolerance, but to the active promotion of vice.

Why should we expect them to be otherwise? This is their worldview. Ultimately, the responsibility for advancing truth is the duty of those who know the truth and who still have respect for our biblical heritage. This nation was founded on Christian virtue. The Founders, as has been proved so clearly, were men of deep faith and conviction. But today we bear their mantle, and we bear the truth of God's word revealed in Scripture. **To allow ourselves to be silenced by the humanist worldview would be to abdicate our responsibility before God. It would be to hide our lamps under a bushel, when we have the Light of the world in our hearts.**

The Arena of Conflict

There is no more ominous threat to our future as a nation than the campaign for homosexuality being waged today in the popular media. The same perversions that brought ancient societies to ruin—and that have been anathema to every civilization known to man for more than five thousand years—are now paraded in the public eye and almost universally defended as inalienable rights. We find that 45 percent of adults in this country believe homosexuality is an "acceptable

lifestyle," and thanks to relentless programming in the schools, 85 percent of high school seniors say homosexuality is acceptable. Likewise, 86 percent say that homosexuality is determined at birth.

Throughout Scripture, God's judgment on sexual perversion is made strikingly clear. The New Testament says,

"Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10).

Yet, despite such warning, the secular world has chosen sodomy over sanity, and we are paying a terrible price for that choice.

As evidence, consider that more than 65 million Americans today are infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including Herpes, Hepatitis B, AIDS, and more than a dozen others—most of which have no known cures. Each year more than 15 million men and women are infected with STDs. An estimated 20 percent of Americans (or one in five) suffers from at least one STD. As reported in June 2001 by the United Nations agency for worldwide disaster relief, more than 20 million people have already died from the global AIDS pandemic, virtually every case of which has a sexual link at some point, and there is still no known cure. This is the real dividend of the sexual revolution.

Most of these diseases will affect young people aged 25 and younger. Considering that the majority of Americans over 40 are more cautious about their

sexual behavior, the statistic of one in five among the entire population means that the percentage of those under 40 who are suffering from these diseases is staggering. It is projected that at least ten million of the fifteen million new cases reported each year will affect people 30 years of age and younger.

This is the price of ignoring custom and discarding Christian morality. When society denies what millions have known to be true, there will be a price to pay. “No one seems to remember,” writes Jacques Ellul, “that there has never been a society without a moral code, and the chief thing lacking in our Western world is precisely an ethical code and a system of accepted values.” Then he says:

“As soon as there is even a tiny blossoming of values, the intellectuals rise up to reject it and jeer at it. In doing so, they give no proof that they are free and intelligent, but demonstrate only that they are impotent and have surrendered to the madness in which negation becomes an end in itself.”⁶

The rejection of the moral code means that there can be no restraint on immorality and no limits to its spread. According to a report from the Reuters wire service, the teen pregnancy rate has skyrocketed in recent years. The rate in the U.S. is at least four times higher than that of France, Germany, and Japan. A study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York reported that, even with a downturn of about 17 percent during the 1990s, teen pregnancy in the U.S. continues to be higher than most developed countries. Teen pregnancy here is 84 per 1,000 women, aged 15 to 19, compared

with 20 per 1,000 in France, 16 per 1,000 in Germany, 10 per 1,000 in Japan. Only the nations of the former Soviet Union are comparable, according to the journal *Family Planning Perspectives*.

Whenever abstinence-based programs are introduced, either by legislation or by local practice, those on the other side cry foul, often claiming such programs are an unconstitutional establishment of religion, but

- abstinence never leads to sexually transmitted diseases;
- saving sex for marriage never leads to the guilt, regrets, loss of self-respect, or emotional turmoil of promiscuity;
- couples who save their intimacy for marriages are shielded against many of the problems, such as divorce, that always follow in the wake of fornication or adultery.

Despite the evidence, which is abundant and readily available, the number of cohabiting couples is still rising, with an increase of 72 percent since 1992.

It is important to recognize that none of this has come about by accident. The tragedy of death, disease, and despair is the legacy of all those who have pushed for more and more sexual license, including Dr. Alfred Kinsey, whose “studies” on sexual behavior shocked the nation. In *Sexual Behavior and the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior and the Human Female* (1953), Kinsey claimed to reveal what was really going on in America’s bedrooms. He claimed that 95 percent of American males engaged in some form of not just promiscuous, but criminal sexual behavior. He claimed that women (and even children) were much more sexually active than anyone realized and, further, that this was a good thing.

However, as new investigations have discovered, Kinsey's first report, which sold more than 200,000 copies in just the first two months, was based on surveys conducted in prisons, including some 1,400 sex offenders. It was shockingly dishonest and statistically invalid. In a brilliant expose, Kinsey: *Crimes & Consequences*, Dr. Judith Reisman uncovered the fraud and the motives behind Kinsey's work. Yet, such studies have dramatically changed the attitudes and behaviors of Americans ever since that time.

The Wages of Sin

Whether a culture has been corrupted by fraud or by ignorance, the damage may not be so easily contained, and a culture without a healthy sense of moral restraint, as noted by Jacques Ellul above, will have the madness consume everything in sight. Consider how pornography has permeated our society. **In 1973 Americans spent about \$10 million on pornography. By 1987 that figure had grown to more than \$8 billion.⁷ That's billion with a "B."** Today, by some estimates, the figure exceeds \$14 billion, and pornography is considered by many in the investment community to be the new glamour stock of the 21st century.⁸

Along with the rise of teen pregnancy and illegitimacy, violence against women has also increased by more than 525 percent since 1960. This country has the highest number of reported rapes in the world—more than 10 times that of Great Britain and 20 times that of Japan. It is no accident that the states which record the highest volume of sales of "adult" and sexually explicit materials also have the greatest number of rape cases.⁹

The recent scandal in the Catholic church points out the degree to which the society has been corrupted by the deregulation of sexual morality. In the culture at large, it has been estimated that 1 of 3 girls and 1 of 7 boys will be sexually molested before their 18th birthday in this country.¹⁰ In 1973, some 167,000 cases of child abuse were reported in America. The figure exceeded 2 million cases by 1990.¹¹

In addition, nearly 50 percent of all American households are run by a single parent. In 1960, just 5 percent of all births in this country were to unmarried women. By 1999, 33 percent of all births and almost 70 percent of African American births were to unmarried women. Out-of-wedlock childbirth is not just the leading cause of single-parenthood—it is the number one cause of poverty among women.¹²

The greatest ongoing tragedy of this or any generation is the crisis of abortion in America. Since 1972 there have been over 41 million abortions performed in America. That is more than 1,350,000 abortions every year, and they are often done after the first trimester. Late-term abortions and partial-birth abortion are no longer rare. Even the American Medical Association has said that partial-birth abortions are "never medically necessary," yet some 5,000 times a year in this country, this procedure takes the life of a viable child. After his legs have been delivered, the abortionist kills the infant by puncturing the skull and sucking out the baby's brains. We can only wonder how God can ever forgive a nation that perpetuates such crimes against humanity.

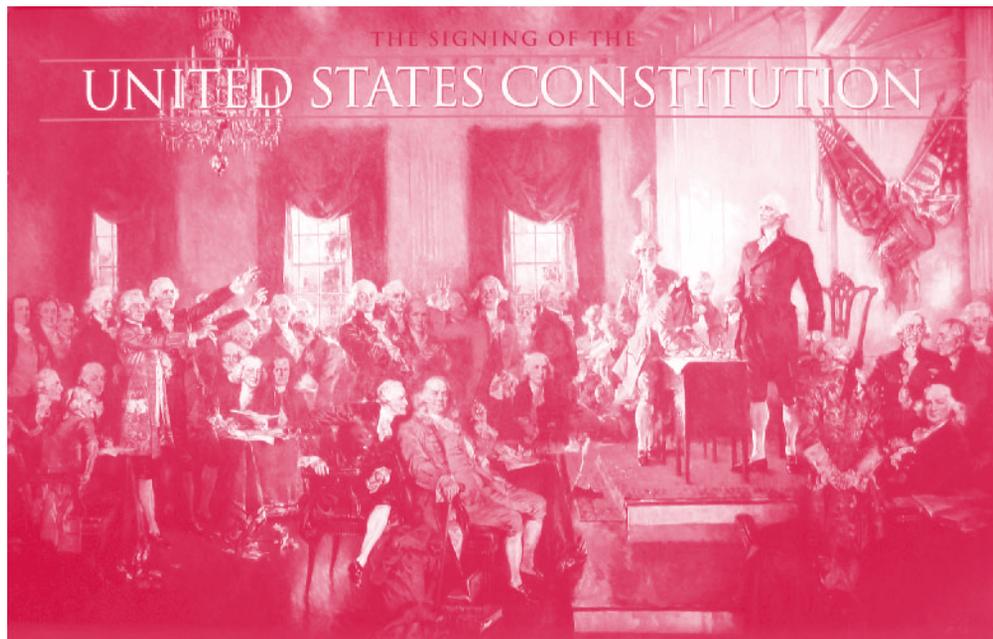
The Declaration of Independence de-

clares that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” yet we allow that guarantee of liberty to be violated in the most gruesome ways imaginable. Francis Schaeffer once said that the right to life is more fundamental and more basic than the right to liberty or the pursuit of happiness. Without life, nothing else matters. **The horror that has been unleashed on America (and in the world) in the name of “a woman’s right to choose” is nothing less than the “American Holocaust.” In Germany, the Nazis killed more than six million Jews, Poles, Christians, and other “undesirables” during the Second World War. In America, 41 million innocent children have been slaughtered. And for what?**

To complete the circle of this discussion, it will help to remember the context in which the Supreme Court’s infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down,

back in 1973. Having just passed through the sixties, the moral values, traditions, and laws that had governed Western civilization for two thousand years had been jettisoned in barely one decade. It was in that moral vacuum that the Court acted to provide what they felt was a solution to the problems created by the new immorality in America. **As D. James Kennedy has said, “The sin which was engendered in the *sexual* revolution was to be covered up by the *abortion* revolution. Thus began the parade of the dead.”** Dr. Kennedy adds:

Today those aborted babies would be graduating from high school, choosing colleges, beginning new careers. But one out of every four of them is not here. If you watched a graduation ceremony this past year, you should know that every fourth place should have been occupied by a cap and gown that was empty, for that child was not there—not



The Signing of the U.S. Constitution, 1787

*there to be valedictorian, not there to become a doctor, a lawyer, a minister, or whatever their destiny might have been—perhaps President of the United States.*¹³

Weighed in the Balance

So, what have been the results of this decades-long battle over essential beliefs?

The secular humanism that was supposed to liberate mankind from his enslavement to the past has bred not liberty, but atheism wedded with hedonism, which has resulted in a chronicle of devastated lives that boggles the mind. If we consider the lies that have been told and the promises that have been broken, we certainly must realize that the ancient promise of “enlightenment” was never anything more than a restatement of an ancient lie in modern dress. It is only fitting to remember it here:

Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked ...
(Genesis 3:4-7a)*

The evil unleashed on the world by that ancient lie continues to extract a terrible price, and it will continue to do so

until we who know the truth rise to face the challenge and, in the power of the Spirit of God, reclaim what has been lost. As we consider these things, we need to know that the fortress we must confront is built on lies. Despite protestations to the contrary, the anti-Christian left does not actually care about the issues they have promoted for the last forty years. As Dennis Prager has said in his syndicated column,

In general, the left does not care about women, independent judiciaries, minorities, democracy, gays or almost anything else for which it marches. That is why the left opposed America’s war in Afghanistan, which liberated women from being treated like animals. Nearly all the causes the left speaks for are noble-sounding covers for its real agenda—the overthrowing of Western, especially Judeo-Christian and capitalist, values. Remember the chant at Stanford, “Hey, hey, ho ho, Western civ has got to go”? That is what animates the left.

In the terms of modern psychology, says Prager, the hatred that sustains the left is their antagonism toward the values of their fathers. In a graduation speech in 2002, former Dartmouth College President James O. Freedman, another liberal, said that the purpose of a college education is “to question your father’s values.” This will come as a surprise, of course, to those who thought that the purpose of a college education was “to discover what is true and what is good.” But the source of our conflict is this, Prager says:

America embodies all that the left dislikes. It is the most religious of the industrialized democracies (proudly and uniquely Judeo-Christian). It is also the most capitalist. And, what drives the left especially crazy is that with all this religion and capitalism, America is the most powerful force on earth—economically, militarily and culturally.¹⁴

Simply recognizing the source of the anger that motivates the other side will not give us victory in the culture wars, but it is an essential first step in preparing for the battle. The first task in any conflict is to “know your enemy,” and as we come to understand the forces that are arrayed against us, and as we recognize the trail of disaster in their wake, we will be better prepared to make our voices heard and to make a real and lasting difference for the kingdom.

Notes

1 Mackubin Thomas Owens. “Lost in the Sixties: Their Memory Ain’t Mine.” *National Review Online*: June 5, 2002.

- 2 Collier, Peter, and David Horowitz. *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the Sixties*. New York: Summit Books, 1989.
- 3 Joe Klein, “How About a Swift Kick?” *Newsweek*, July 26, 1993. 30.
- 4 Herbert Marcuse. *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*. New York: Beacon Press, 1972. 17.
- 5 Marcuse 127.
- 6 Jacques Ellul. *The Betrayal of the West*. (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). 196.
- 7 Gorman, Carol. *Pornography*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1988.
- 8 Dan Ackman. *How Big Is Porn?* *Forbes*: May 25, 2001.
- 9 See United States Department of Justice, FBI Crime Report, 1993.
- 10 Dr. Gene Abel of Emory University reports that law enforcement officers estimate that around 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually assaulted before age 18. The typical child molester will abuse more than 360 victims over the course of his lifetime. He will likely abuse 30-60 before he is caught for the first time.
- 11 See Ralph W. Bennett, “The Relationship Between Pornography and Extrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse,” in *The Police Chief*: February 1991.
- 12 William J. Bennet, Ed. *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*. Washington, D.C.: Empower America, 2001. 43.
- 13 D. James Kennedy. “Life: An Inalienable Right.” Sermon given in Feb. 1999.
- 14 Dennis Prager, “Why Does the Left Support the Palestinians?” June 26, 2002.

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Sailing of the Pilgrims from Plymouth, England, 1620