

SCHOOL SHOOTINGS: THE SECOND AMENDMENT CONTROVERSY : PART 1

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Contrary to what some people may be tempted to believe after reading the following two-part article, I am not a liberal by any degree, and I have never been a liberal. Stated more clearly, I do not embrace liberal viewpoints when it comes to such issues as abortion, embryonic stem cell research,

same-sex "marriage", or most other issues which are dear to the hearts of liberals. Anyone who knows me relatively well -- such as through following my online content on the social networks -- will already realize that, being as I have been a lifelong, Bible-believing Christian, I am actually quite conservative in my views.

But you see, to some people, who I really am as a person, and what I actually believe, will not matter at all. Why? Because such people cling to this defensive mentality which compels them to believe that anyone who does not agree with them, is automatically a liberal. I have already seen this happen on Facebook. In fact, it happened to me the other day the minute that I expressed my views regarding the latest gun violence. Without even knowing anything about me, this particular person used some disrespectful language, and then he accused me of being a liberal. I must confess that I was both shocked and amused at the same time, because it really exposed how some of these people think.

At any rate, let's get to the gist of the matter at hand. As some of my readers will already know, the Second Amendment -- or Amendment II -- of the Bill of Rights, which constitutes the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, states as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

----- End Quote -----

This amendment was authenticated by Thomas Jefferson, who was the Secretary of State at the time. It was crafted into its final form in September of 1789. Two years later, it was adopted on December 15, 1791 as a part of the Bill of Rights. The right to keep and bear arms was in fact based in part on, and influenced by, the English Bill of Rights of 1689. This part of the English Bill of Rights evolved from the fact that in Seventeenth Century England, the Roman Catholic monarch, James II -- who was king of England, Scotland and Ireland -- had tried to disarm the Protestants. He also had an interest in creating a permanent army, and was likewise at odds with

the English Parliament. However, James II was deposed in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, and the right of Protestants to bear arms was restored with the English Bill of Rights a year later.

Considering that rough period of English history, as well as our own nation's struggle against King George III and the English Parliament during the American Revolution, it comes as no surprise that America's Founding Fathers thought it important to include similar language in the Bill of Rights. While there has been considerable debate regarding the full intent of the Founding Fathers, and their motivations for the inclusion of the Second Amendment, it is agreed that a protection against tyranny was one motivating factor, but it was not the only one.

What is interesting to note about the Second Amendment is that while the U.S. Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the right to keep and bear arms belongs to individuals, it also ruled that this right is not unlimited. Neither does it prohibit all regulation of either firearms or similar devices. This ruling forms part of the foundation for the current ongoing debate between gun owners, the government, and people who are greatly concerned about the huge number of firearms in the United States, and the ease with which they can be obtained. Decades of school shootings, work place shootings, assassination attempts, accidental deaths amongst young children, etc., have only served to heat up this debate.

As I write this article, we are only days past yet another horrific school shooting at a school in Parkland, Florida, which thus far has left seventeen individuals dead. As many of you will already know, the killer -- a nineteen-year-old by the name of Nikolas Cruz -- used an AR-15 assault rifle during his killing spree. I know very little about firearms. However, what I have come to learn is that this rifle is a military-grade weapon. I find it very alarming that a kid barely out of high school was able to acquire such a weapon.

As can be expected, because of this latest tragedy, tensions are running very high right now. Casting blame and trying to assign guilt is coming from every quarter, while it seems no one is willing to accept responsibility for what has just happened. Everyone appears to be blaming someone else. The

prevalent attitude seems to be "Let's just pass the buck!" Isn't that what they always do when they mess up? Nobody wants to admit their failures, so they try to pass the blame and the guilt down the line to someone else. I was reading a news article the other day, and the very last line just about made my jaw drop, because it offers clear proof of what I just said. It stated the following:

----- Begin Quote -----

"At the end of day," Sheriff Israel said, "make no mistake about it, America, the only one to blame for this killing is the killer himself."

----- End Quote -----

Sheriff Scott Israel is the Sheriff of Broward County in the state of Florida. Parkland -- where the latest gun shooting occurred -- is located in Broward Country. But the audacity of that man! The only one to blame? I am sorry, but I simply cannot agree with that statement. Yes, we can all agree that Nikolas Cruz was the killer, as he did confess to committing the crime, according to news reports. However, trying to pin this heinous crime on him alone is a cop-out and demonstrates cowardice, in my view. If you are confused by this statement, just keep reading, and everything will become clear to you.

While there is a lot of shouting going on right now between different parties, all of the loud, angry voices do seem to agree on one thing; and that is that the FBI -- the Federal Bureau of Investigation -- is quite guilty. That is, after Nikolas Cruz himself. From everything I have read online, both in recent days, as well as in years past, it seems that the FBI has a long history -- decades in fact -- of missing important clues, overlooking evidence, neglecting warnings, ignoring tips, and in some cases, even letting go persons who they knew were dangerous and threats to society, only to have those individuals commit a serious crime later. This has been all over the news in recent days. The FBI is taking a serious beating right now.

Obviously, I cannot list every failure on their part; but a few which come to mind include the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center; 9/11, in which supposedly nineteen terrorists were somehow able to get past America's security radar and

kill thousands of people; the Boston Marathon attack; and, of course, the many mass shootings which have occurred in our schools, in various places of work, on military bases, and elsewhere. Folks, no matter how you look at it, that is a lot of misses. It really makes one wonder what the agency is doing. It is almost as if it has its head in the sand.

As I said, at this current time, there is a verbal war raging online, in the mass media, and in probably every other place where people are expressing their opinions and their concerns regarding this latest school massacre. Each faction has been placed on high alert, and is endeavoring to justify their own position, while they attack, ridicule and demean anyone who dares to disagree with them. To be quite honest, I am rather dismayed by some of the reactions I am seeing; not just from secular people, but even from some Bible-believing Christians.

As I note in my recent poem called "Gun Violence", it seems that every time that one of these horrible school massacres occurs, there is an automatic Pavlov dog response from the NRA -- National Rifle Association -- from an assortment of politicians, from pro-Second Amendment advocates, etc. They all come out in full force and flood the mass media, social networks, and other areas of public discourse, with their opinions, as they try to defend their position as gun owners.

I find this really sad. Seventeen individuals just lost their lives in a horrible way, and a few others are said to still be in critical condition, and may possibly die. Other lives -- the survivors and families of the deceased -- have been destroyed, and profoundly affected by this sad incident. Yet all these gun owners seem to want to do is to quickly defend their position, and tell us why they must be allowed to keep their guns. I may be wrong, but that seems to be all many of them are concerned about. In light of what just happened, I find their position indefensible.

There is just a certain callousness I detect in some of these people which is really quite disturbing. The other day I was watching a news interview with one of the teachers who works at the school where this latest gun shooting occurred. As she asked in the video, how many more innocent children must die before something serious is done which will take guns out of the hands of people who have no right having them? How many more children must pay such an awful price, due to inaction

on the part of compromised politicians, on the part of the powerful gun lobby, and on the part of gun owners in general?

More to the point, when are all of you pro-Second Amendment advocates going to stop defending your right to bear arms, and tell us in precise terms what you want to do to stop all of this slaughter? As far as I am concerned, the onus is on you to do something, and not on those of us who don't like guns, and who don't even own any guns. We aren't the source of the problem. You are! Or are you just going to hope that this incident dies quickly, and everyone forgets about it, just as has occurred with all the past school shootings?

You gun owners can put forth whatever arguments you like; but none of you can deny the truth. The simple, undeniable fact is that there are way too many guns in the country. Let me clarify that when I say "guns", I am referring to all kinds of guns, whether they are pistols, regular rifles, assault rifles, etc. In fact, from what I have read, there are more guns in the hands of American citizens than anywhere else in the world. There is one gun for every citizen. Not only that, but according to some online sources, no other country has as serious a gun problem as America. Furthermore, every single day, up to a few hundred people die in the USA as a result of gun violence. Not so in other countries. Why is that? Could it be because other nations have stricter gun control laws, and/or less guns in the hands of ordinary citizens?

If you are willing to take an honest look at the depth of this tragedy in America, please avail yourself of the following link. What it reveals is totally unacceptable and inexcusable:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_violence_in_the_United_States

As that dear Parkland, Florida teacher stated in the news interview, there has been enough talk. Talk is cheap, and it has been going on for years now. What we need is real action, and not just more excuses, empty platitudes and promises which will never be kept. I am willing to be that if some of you Second Amendment defenders were the parents of some of the children who were just murdered in Florida, you would feel a lot differently. You wouldn't be so quick to defend your current position.

So while Sheriff Scott Israel is trying to place all of the blame on the shoulders of Nikolas Cruz; and while a lot of other angry voices are trying to make the FBI the scapegoat; I have this to say. The FBI is not the only one to blame for the Parkland massacre. Neither are the other investigative agencies, social agencies, teachers, counselors, parents or friends who may have noticed something odd about that boy. Yes, they all failed too at different levels if they didn't say something when they should have. However, the fact is that the gun culture in the United States is likewise to blame for this tragedy. As long as the "I won't surrender my guns" attitude continues to prevail across the country, I remain convinced that these tragic incidents will continue to occur, because loose cannons will always find a way to obtain weapons.

As I noted earlier, in recent days, the gun rights advocates have been out in full force. They are promoting their message everywhere, such as on the social networks. One thing which has become rather evident to me, is that these people seem to have a propensity for constantly using fear and paranoia in order to try to force us to see things their way. One of the tactics they are currently using in their never-ending battle to mold public opinion, is to reach into the recent past to find the vilest, most despicable monster they possibly can. And lo and behold, there is Adolf Hitler. Seriously. These people are like parrots. They are bringing up the example of Hitler ad nauseam, as if doing that is going to convince us that they are right.

Then, after they reach into the past in order to fetch Adolf Hitler, they propel us into the not-too-distant future, and they warn us that if Americans are forced to give up their guns, or at the very least, if more strict gun controls are put in place, the United States will soon find itself living under an evil tyrant, and be subjected to the crazy whims of a conniving, dictatorial monster who will be much worse than Hitler. Of course, to really fill us with fear, they have to constantly remind us that Hitler allegedly said that before you can dominate a people, you have to take their guns away first. As I said, it is all about fear and paranoia.

On a side note, let me just point out that there have always been dictators in this evil world. Of course, in our modern politically-correct society, we are no longer permitted to

call them dictators. After all, that is just too blunt. So now, such leaders are referred to as autocrats or strongmen. That doesn't sound quite as bad as dictator. But I hope you understand why the word "autocrat" is so heavily promoted by the mass media. As I have mentioned before, the truth is that the United States, in typical hypocritical fashion, talks a lot about promoting freedom and democracy around the world, while at the same time, it openly supports various dictators, both with money, as well as with military hardware. Some of these leaders they even refer to as "presidents".

Personally, I find it quite ludicrous. Those leaders did not win by a fair vote. Not only was their election fixed, but they also threaten their opponents with death, incarceration, and who knows what else, so that they will either drop out of the election, or submit to the soon-to-be "president". I have mentioned before that as long as a corrupt leader of a nation follows America's agenda, Washington, D.C. does not really seem to care how much said leader oppresses his own people. Of course, now and then, Washington politicians will chide a certain national leader for their poor human rights record, but that is just to keep up appearances. It is for domestic public consumption, and nothing more.

At any rate, as I was explaining earlier, these pro-Second Amendment gun rights advocates will dig up a dictatorial monster from the past, and then project him into the future, claiming that this is what we have to look forward to, if we force them to give up their guns. We will get a real monster. If you are one of such people who have been using this silly, baseless strategy, let me ask you a simple question. What solid, undeniable proof can you offer that the United States would soon be ruled by a tyrannical dictator like Hitler, if more strict gun controls were to be enforced?

The truth is, that all one has to do in order to prove what a ridiculous claim that is, is to look around the world. If what American gun owners are saying regarding a Twenty-First Century Hitler rising up is true, then every nation in the world which currently has more strict gun control laws than the USA, and where there are few guns in the hands of the citizenry, would now be ruled by a dictator. However, guess what? That is most definitely not the case. As I said, yes, there are some ruthless dictators, but they are clearly in the minority.

For example, take a look at Japan which has very strict gun control laws. Is it ruled by an evil dictator? Not that I am aware of. In fact, Japan is a constitutional monarchy, and also one of the most peaceful nations in the world. Online statistics state that the Japanese rarely experience more than ten shooting deaths in an entire year; and that is in a nation with a population of 127 million citizens. Australia, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom also fare much better than the USA. Such nations with their low levels of gun violence put the United States to absolute shame.

So as I said, this Hitler claim that is being promoted by certain gun ownership advocates is based on nothing more than fear and paranoia. It is a not-so-veiled attempt to make people afraid to give up their guns, by pointing to a nonexistent "what if" scenario involving a nonexistent dictator. It is a straw man tactic, so I hope that you can see through it as I have. For me personally, the real irony of what these people are doing, is that while they dig up a monster from the past, and try to scare us into letting them keep their guns by pointing to a fictitious monster in the future, at the same time, they also seem to want to do very little to minimize the terrible monsters we have amongst us right now who are committing these unspeakable atrocities.

As weird as it sounds, it is almost as if they are telling us that we have to let them keep their guns, and endure the evil monsters who are killing our children right now, so that we don't get a worse evil monster in the future. Do you follow me? In other words, as I stated earlier, as long as guns are so readily available in the United States, we'll continue to have repeats of Springfield, Columbine, Red Lake, Virginia Tech, DeKalb, Sandy Hook, Las Vegas, Sutherland Springs, Rancho Tehama and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. It will never end until gun ownership is reined in significantly.

Are these gun advocates really okay with this scenario? Are they really willing to view the death of these kids as an acceptable loss, just as long as they can keep their guns, and keep their imaginary future tyrant at bay? They may not say it openly, but that appears to be what their actions are saying when they resist any attempt to make it more difficult for people to purchase such weapons. And remember, we are not

just talking about hand guns and regular hunting rifles. We are talking about military-grade weaponry getting into the hands of these emotionally unstable people. As far as I am concerned, there is no acceptable loss. There can be no "collateral damage" by way of our children, just so the gun owners can keep their firearms. It's madness, and it is sick.

While constantly bringing up Adolf Hitler in conversations has been rather popular with Second Amendment defenders, during the past few days I have noticed a sudden shift, and a new tactic being employed by these same people. It seems that overnight, everyone is now talking about mental health issues, and reminding us how many of the school shooters and other killers have been on mind-altering psychotropic drugs of one variety or another. These kinds of drugs can have some extremely serious side effects. This can include thoughts of committing suicide or homicide. According to online sources, drugs which have now been associated with mass shootings and similar acts of violence include Ambien, Anafranil, Celexa, Effexor, Geodon, Hydroxyzine, Lexapro, Luvox, Paxil, Prozac, Risperdal, Ritalin, Trazodone, Vyvanse, Wellbutrin, Xanax and Zoloft. As you may know, some of these prescription drugs are used to treat ADHD, while others are antidepressants.

Similar to the Hitler stories, this talk about psychiatric drugs and mental health issues is now everywhere. Everyone is picking up the ball and rolling with it. Just conduct a Google search, and you will quickly see what I mean. Now, I am not suggesting that these claims are not true. It is very evident that for someone to commit such a horrendous act as a mass shooting, something must be terribly wrong in their mental and/or emotional department. Furthermore, we all know that thanks to money-hungry Big Pharma and unscrupulous and greedy doctors and psychiatrists, pumping our kids with all of these powerful drugs at a very young age has become very popular, and very profitable. It certainly was not like this when I was a kid. Back then, normal treatment for behavioral problems at home or at school might include a paddle, time out, standing in the corner, or something similar. Kids were not pumped full of drugs so that half the time they were in a stupor.

However, just the fact that this message regarding mental health and drugs, and their relationship to shooters, is being promoted so forcefully on social networks, in the mass

media, by the government, etc., makes it highly suspect, in my view. We need to ask ourselves why this message is being promoted now. More importantly, who is behind this campaign to convince us that it is the drugs and the unstable minds that we should blame? I will tell you plainly what I think. I suspect that this is a red herring. It is a smoke screen that is being promoted by the gun rights/Second Amendment advocates themselves. It is an attempt to manipulate public opinion, and to divert us from the real truth regarding this entire issue; a truth which I have already spoken about in this article.

Stop and think about this for a moment. The undeniable fact is that there have been people with mental health issues in the United States, who have been on strong drugs for decades and decades. Yet these mass shootings at schools and other locations only started about two decades ago, and Columbine in Colorado was not the first incident. So what happened? Exactly what changed? The point is this: While some or even all of these killers may have been taking some kinds of drugs due to mental or emotional issues, that fact alone does NOT make a person a killer, such as the ones we have seen in recent years. The aforementioned drugs may give such people suicidal or homicidal tendencies, but they could not take it another step further until something else happened.

So what am I saying? I am saying that the change which has occurred within the United States over the past two decades, is that firearms of every variety have become more readily available, so that today, there are simply just too many guns in America. Even worse, not only have guns become more easily accessible, even to kids who are still in high school, but they have also become increasingly more powerful and deadly, so that they can quickly wreak the carnal destruction which we have seen at such places as Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. All of this is in addition to the failures on the part of the FBI and other government agencies, as well as on the part of other individuals who may have been made aware of the serious problems in these people lives, but who said nothing or did nothing.

To reiterate, absolutely no one can deny that no matter how messed up a person may be mentally, and no matter what drugs they may be taking, they cannot possibly become these crazy shooters if they don't have access to guns. That is what I

believe pro-Second Amendment advocates are currently trying to divert us from seeing and realizing. That is why they are now pushing the mental health and drugs issue in our faces. If too many people come to the consensus that there are way too many guns in America, and that said guns are too readily available and too easy to acquire, gun owners fear that the time will eventually come when they may be forced to give up their firearms, whether they like it or not.

So, in my view, this current campaign may be one way in which they are fighting back. It is an intentional diversion. They want to get everyone talking about the drugs, and how these killers are mentally unstable, so that they will forget that there are simply way too many guns in the nation, which is really the root of this entire problem. Of course, it seems obvious that Big Pharma will also benefit from this campaign, because more ignorant parents will become convinced that they need to put their poor kids on mind-altering drugs.

So, as I have already made clear, take away the guns, and the killers will never become killers; at least not with guns. In recent days, I have seen so many gun rights advocates say ad nauseam that guns do not kill. It is sick people who do the killing. They parrot this thought over and over again until they are blue in the face. This, in my view, is a half-truth, doublespeak, and reverse psychology. It is a sly attempt to distort our perception. Yes, we can all agree that the guns cannot kill by themselves. But, let's turn that around and speak the real truth: These killers could not kill if they did not have the guns. So let's reduce the amount of guns in America, and keep them out of their hands. End of story.

Now, given the size of the U.S. population, and other factors such as limited resources in some cases, I fully recognize that it is unrealistic to expect that the authorities will be able to identify, catch and stop every single would-be campus killer. The system simply is not perfect, and it will never be perfect. Yet at the same time, as we have already seen, in some of these cases -- such as the most recent one in Florida -- there has been obvious failure on the part of the FBI, and on the part of other individuals who were in positions to stop the carnage before it was ever carried out. But they didn't do anything. This is inexcusable.

While we have now discussed the physical aspects of these

tragedies, this article would not be complete if we did not look at this situation from another angle. As I mentioned to one of my online friends, I understand that passing laws to further restrict firearms purchases and ownership is not a permanent, bulletproof solution. We can improve background checks. We can extend the waiting period before one is even allowed to purchase a firearm. We can ensure that first-time gun owners undergo proper training. In questionable cases we can demand that an individual submit himself to a medical and psychological evaluation. We can also punish gun dealers who intentionally break the law for the sake of profit. We can do all kinds of things to try to mitigate the horrible violence which is being perpetrated against both our children and our adults. I definitely believe that we should do them, and as soon as possible.

But you see, part of the tragedy here is that these things should have already been done, years ago. In fact, the laws are already on the books, but corrupt politicians have been slow to act, and authorities have been slow to enforce them, due to strong resistance from the gun lobby, and from gun owners in general. As we have seen, this resistance continues to this very day. So this is a massive failure on all sides. However, what I wish to emphasize is this: No matter what we do, I am intelligent enough to realize that we can't possibly legislate righteousness. Yes, we can indeed threaten people with punishment so that they will hopefully be deterred from committing such foul deeds, but we cannot, and will never be able to dictate what is going on inside a person's mind and heart.

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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SCHOOL SHOOTINGS: THE SECOND AMENDMENT CONTROVERSY : PART 2

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Bad Fruit Will Result When We Abandon God And Our Bible-Based Spiritual Foundation, The Voice Of Conscience, God's Laws Are Written On Our Hearts, Everybody Knows Right From Wrong, The Wickedness Of The Unregenerate Human Heart, Past Feeling The Conviction Of God's Spirit, Is America Daring God To Judge Her?, Biblical Warnings About Hardening Our Heart, Spiritual Blindness, Do Some People Lose The Ability To Know Right From Wrong?, Effects Of Powerful Prescription Drugs, Can There Be A Complete Disconnect With Our Conscience Due To Psychotropic Drugs?, Drugs: Gateways To The Spirit World?, Nikolas Cruz's Claimed To Hear Demons, America Is In Deep Spiritual Trouble, Nationwide Repentance And Renewal Of Our Minds And Hearts, The Wicked Refuse To Repent, Conclusion, Suggested Reading

This leads us to what I believe is the underlying cause of all of these sick tragedies. It is something which I have discussed a number of times before. Simply put, we cannot remove God and His Word -- the Bible -- from our government, from our schools, from our public square, from our families, and from our personal lives, and then expect everything to be a-okay. The Bible has been both the moral as well as the spiritual foundation of our nation for two centuries. Many of our laws are based upon its precepts. Yet for fifty years now, we have knowingly and intentionally been ripping out that foundation from under our very feet. As a result, many people in this nation have lost their moral compass, as well as their fear of and respect for God, and the bad fruit of such foolishness is evident all around us. Those of you who share my Christian convictions will know exactly what I am talking about.

I must confess that I am quite dumbfounded when I come upon comments in the news, on social networks, etc., where people make the claim that some of our children no longer know the difference between right and wrong. I am flabbergasted. This is extremely hard for me personally to understand. If you are also a fellow Christian, then you may already know why I feel this way. If not, let me tell you. As I explain in a number of other articles, I am convinced that God instills a Voice of Conscience in every single one of us. It is inescapable.

His Laws regarding morality and acceptable human behavior are indelibly etched on the tables of our hearts. Consider the following verses. Take particular note of the words I have emphasized in uppercase letters:

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew THE WORK OF THE LAW WRITTEN IN THEIR HEARTS, THEIR CONSCIENCE ALSO BEARING WITNESS, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

Romans 2:14-15, KJV

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:"

Proverbs 3:3, KJV

"Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart."

Proverbs 7:3, KJV

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;"

Jeremiah 17:1, KJV

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

2 Corinthians 3:3, KJV

You see. It doesn't matter where we live, or who we are. Deep within our beings, we all know what is right, and what is wrong. Why? Because as the Apostle Paul clearly writes, "their conscience also bearing witness". We can refer to it as the Voice of Conscience, or as the little angel sitting on our shoulder, but it is there directing our thoughts and our actions. So even if we didn't have the Bible, we would still be held accountable for our actions. Whether we live in some modern city, or in some remote village deep in the jungles of Indonesia, we still know that it is wrong to kill. It is wrong to steal. It is wrong to have sex with our neighbor's wife. It is wrong to have sex with a person of the same sex. God has put it in us to know. No one can deny

this or feign ignorance; even if they try to rub God out of their lives, or say that the Bible is not His inspired Word.

A person would have to completely harden his heart to God's Spirit in order to not know these things. And actually, it is not that he does not know them; it is just that because of his own stubborn pride and willfulness, he has knowingly chosen to consciously and purposely block out the Voice of God which is speaking to his wicked heart. I am reminded of the following verses which clearly reveal the wickedness of an unregenerate human heart:

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."

Psalms 10:4, KJV

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 6:5, KJV

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

"And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

Mark 7:20-23, KJV

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Romans 7:18, KJV

Wow! What an honest picture of the human heart! Sadly, this is exactly what we see happening in America in our modern day, and it is very alarming. Many people have become so hardened against God, that they are past feeling anything. They have become so darkened in their understanding due to sin and rebellion in their lives, that they have no idea of the spiritual depths to which they have fallen. Either that,

or they just don't care what God thinks about them. Sadly, we Christians know to what degree they have fallen, because we witness, read about and hear about their ungodly behavior every single day, and it is quite disgusting. It is as if certain segments of the American population are purposely challenging God with their sick, defiant, immoral behavior, and just daring Him to mete out His judgments against the nation. As I explain in the series "Don't Ever Underestimate Our Spiritual Enemy", God is not asleep, and someday His axe is going to fall. They won't be laughing then.

It may surprise you to know, that almost two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul described this very same behavior and ungodly attitude when he wrote the following in two of his Epistles:

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

Ephesians 4:17-19, KJV

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

Philippians 2:15, KJV

So, as you can see, God definitely knows the score, and He has known it for a very long time. He made us, and so He obviously recognizes the potential evil that resides within every single one of us. He knows what we are capable of doing, if the right conditions present themselves, and if we choose to harden our hearts against Him. This issue is so serious with the Lord, that the Bible is filled with verses which warn us against hardening our hearts, so that we become spiritually blind, and deaf to hearing the Voice of Conscience. Consider the following examples:

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be

stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

Isaiah 1:4-6, KJV

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

Isaiah 29:13-14, KJV

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Matthew 15:7-9, KJV

"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."

Mark 6:52, KJV

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Mark 7:6, KJV

"And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?"

Mark 8:17, KJV

"And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

Mark 10:4-5, KJV

"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

Mark 16:14, KJV

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Luke 24:25-26, KJV

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

John 12:40, KJV

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

Acts 7:51, KJV

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;"

Romans 2:5-9, KJV

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years . . . Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God . . . While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Hebrews 3:7-9, 12, 15, KJV

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God . . . While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Hebrews 3:12, 15, KJV

"Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Hebrews 4:7, KJV

In light of all of the previous verses, as difficult as it is for me to accept, I have to wonder if perhaps it is possible for a person to become so hardened in their heart against the Lord's Spirit and Still Small Voice, that they truly do not know the difference between right and wrong, and good and bad behavior. Is it possible that the kids and adults who commit these mass shootings are really that far gone? Then I stop to think about the plethora of powerful psychotropic drugs that some of these people have been treated with. We all know how much strong drugs can affect us.

I am not just talking about illegal drugs such as heroin, methamphetamines, etc. I am talking about prescription drugs as well. Many of us have found ourselves in situations where we have had major surgery, or serious oral surgery, or some other type of procedure, which has left us in great pain. In such situations, the first thing we want to do is to run to the pill bottle in order to find some relief. Sometimes we will even cheat a little, just to make sure that we are so numbed up, that we can't feel the slightest bit of pain. Our brain becomes sluggish, we feel like there is cotton in our ears, and we are feeling really, really good.

Now, just imagine what it must feel like to take even more powerful prescription drugs, such as the ones which these killers have had to take on a daily basis. Obviously, I have never done it, so I can't say with any degree of certainty exactly how it affects them. I have taken Hydrocodone once or twice for strong pain following complicated oral surgery, and I really didn't like the effect that it had on my body. So I have not taken it since. But I am wondering if it may be possible for the long-term usage of such psychotropic drugs to result in a complete disconnect between a person and the Voice of God's Spirit -- or conscience -- speaking to their heart. In other words, a total breakdown with their moral compass, so that they don't realize that these heinous acts they are committing are wrong.

Taking this a step further, it has long been said that some drugs serve as a gateway to the Spirit World. Again, I don't know if this is really true or not, because I have never had such an experience in my own life. But if it is true, what if some of these kids are foolishly making a connection with the forces of darkness? Before you scoff at such a possibility, let me remind you that according to news reports, following his arrest, Nikolas Cruz claimed that demons pressured him into killing all of those kids at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Equally alarming is the fact that he is not the first killer to make such claims.

In Cruz's case, whether or not bringing up demons is just a legal ploy by his lawyer so that Cruz can plead temporary insanity remains to be seen. However, from everything I have read online regarding this horrible incident, it seems that this attack involved clear-cut premeditation. Not only that, but right now, many Americans are pleading for blood; so the judicial system may just give it to them by making Cruz an example. Time will certainly tell, but it could very well take years before Cruz's final fate is determined.

No matter how you look at it, the United States is in very deep spiritual trouble; and as we saw earlier, the people, through their own foolish choices over the past fifty years or so, have brought this trouble upon themselves. Of their own free will, many of them have knowingly chosen the way of unrighteousness, and I have no doubt that God has taken notice. Not only has He taken notice, but I am sure that He is not pleased. What has been needed for a very long time now is nationwide repentance, and a forsaking of our sinful ways. I am reminded of the following verses:

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

Proverbs 14:34, KJV

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14, KJV

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw

nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

James 4:7-10, KJV

Not only does America need to engage in full repentance, forsake her ungodly, rebellious behavior, and get her heart right with the Lord, but we as a people need to be renewed in our minds, hearts and spirits, because a lot of us have become spiritually stagnant, or perhaps are already dead in a sense. Consider the following additional verses:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Psalms 51:10, KJV

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:2, KJV

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Ephesians 4:24, KJV

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"

Colossians 3:10, KJV

Sadly, despite all that we have been through as a nation in recent years, this type of genuine nationwide repentance, and cleansing and renewing of our minds and hearts has not yet happened. There seemed to be hope for it, and inklings of it following the tragic events of 9/11, but it did not last long. Today, it is rather evident that in a spiritual sense, we are worse off now than we were back then, and the wicked continue to do even more wickedly with seeming impunity. Let me remind you of a verse I shared earlier. Surely, this verse perfectly describes some of the unregenerate people in America who are

driving the country ever close to her judgment:

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."

Psalms 10:4, KJV

One thing which we all need to realize is that these ongoing mass shootings are just one manifestation or symptom of the serious disease which afflicts our nation. As I said earlier, we need to do everything within our power to mitigate, and hopefully to stop, these heartbreaking incidents. If that means introducing more restrictive gun control laws, then so be it. Despite protests from the gun lobby and pro-Second Amendment advocates, we simply must do it. Our children are worth it, aren't they? But doing these things alone will not fix things. It won't be enough. Unless we attack the problem at the root, that is, at its spiritual root, we are doomed to keep repeating the same mistakes over and over again, and suffering the consequences in the process.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. I pray that it has been a blessing, in your life, and I hope that it has made you think. If you have enjoyed it, and if you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Tumblr, etc, I would also appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, I encourage you to study the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which are related to this article, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

Are Personal Tragedies Due to Sin?

Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts

Demonic Possession and Sickness: A Biblical Perspective

Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?

Don't Ever Underestimate Our Spiritual Enemy

Free Will and Personal Choice

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