Textbook – A Civic Biology, 1925

We have now learned that animals may begin with very simple one-celled forms and end with a group which contains man himself. The great English scientist Charles Darwin explained the theory of evolution. This is the belief that simple forms of life on the earth slowly gave rise to more complex forms.

Man’s Place in Nature.

We see that man must be placed with the vertebrate animals because of his vertebral column. We place man with the apelike mammals because of structural likeness. The group of mammals which includes the monkeys, apes, and man we call the primates.

Evolution of Man.

There once lived races of men who were much lower in their mental organization than present people. If we follow the early history of man, we find that at first he must have been little better than one of the lower animals. Gradually he must have learned to use weapons and kill his prey, first using rough stones for this purpose. Man then began to farm the fields, and to have permanent houses. Civilization began long ago, but even today the earth is not entirely civilized.

*Source: Excerpt from widely-used biology textbook, A Civic Biology, written in 1914 by George W. Hunter, a biology teacher from New York City.*

Document A: Sparks Letter to the Editor (Modified)

Dear Editor:

When the bill against the teaching of evolution in public schools was passed, I could not see why more mothers were not thanking the lawmakers. They were protecting our children from one of the destructive forces which will destroy our civilization. I for one was grateful that they stood up for what was right. And grateful, too, that we have a Christian man for governor who will defend the Word of God against this so-called science.

The Bible tells us that the gates of Hell shall not win against the church. We know there will always be those who set an example for the cross of Christ. But in these times of materialism I thank God deep down in my heart for everyone whose voice is raised for humanity and the coming of God’s kingdom.

Mrs. Jesse Sparks

Pope, Tennessee

*Source: Mrs. Jesse Sparks, letter to the editor, Nashville Tennessean, July 3, 1925.*

Document B: Malone’s Trial Speech (Modified)

The least that this generation can do, your Honor, is to give the next generation all the facts and theories that observation and learning have produced—give it to the children in the hope of heaven that they will make a better world than we have. We have just had a war with 20 million dead. Civilization is not so proud of the work of the adults.

For God’s sake let the children have their minds kept open—close no doors to their knowledge. Make the distinction between religion and science. Let them have both. Let them both be taught. Let them both live.

We feel we stand with progress. We feel we stand with science. We feel we stand with intelligence. We feel we stand with freedom in America. We are not afraid. Where is the fear? We meet it! Where is the fear? We defy it!

*Source: Excerpt from Dudley Field Malone’s speech on the fourth day of the Scopes trial, July 15, 1925. Dayton, Tennessee. Dudley Field Malone was a New York attorney who was on the defense team, defending John Scopes. He argued for the importance of teaching science.*