

Document A: Sparks Letter to the Editor (ORIGINAL)

Editor of the Nashville Tennessean:

At the time the bill prohibiting the teaching of evolution in our public schools was passed by our legislature I could not see why the mothers in greater number were not conveying their appreciation to the members for this act of safeguarding their children from one of the destructive forces which . . . will destroy our civilization. I for one felt grateful for their standing for the right against all criticism. 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 prevail against the church. Therefore we know there will always be standard-bearers for the cross of Christ. But in these times of materialism I am constrained to thank God deep down in my heart for . . . every . . . one whose voice is raised for the uplift of 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. Mrs. Sparks was one of many citizens who wrote letters to Tennessee's newspapers in response to the Butler Act.*

Document B: Malone's Trial Speech (ORIGINAL)

What is the issue that has gained the attention, not only of the American people, but people everywhere? Is it a mere technical question as to whether the defendant Scopes taught the paragraph in the book of science? You think, your Honor, that the News Association in London [is here] because the issue is whether John Scopes taught a couple of paragraphs out of his book? Oh, no. . . .

The least that this generation can do, your Honor, is to give the next generation all the facts, all the available data, all the theories, all the information that learning, that study, that observation has produced—give it to the children in the hope of heaven that they will make a better world of this than we have been able to make it. We have just had a war with twenty million dead. Civilization is not so proud of the work of the adults. Civilization need not be so proud of what the grown-ups have done. For God's sake let the children have their minds kept open—close no doors to their knowledge; shut no door from them. Make the distinction between theology 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 fundamental freedom in America. We are not afraid. Where is the fear? We meet it! Where is the fear? We defy it!

(Profound and continued applause.)

(The bailiff raps for order.)

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.*

Document C: Reverend Straton Article (ORIGINAL)

The real issue at Dayton and everywhere today is: "Whether the religion of the Bible shall be ruled out of the schools and the religion of evolution, with its ruinous results shall be ruled into the schools by law." . . .

[John Scopes's lawyers] left New York and Chicago, where real religion is being most neglected, where law, consequently, is most defied, where vice and crime are most rampant . . . and they went to save from itself a community where women are still honored, where men are still chivalric, where laws are still respected, where home life is still sweet, where the marriage vow is still sacred. . . .

Think of the illogic of it! and the nerve of it! and the colossal vanity of it!

Source: *Excerpt from Reverend John Roach Straton's article in American Fundamentalist, "The Most Sinister Movement in the United States." December 26, 1925. John Roach Straton was a minister who preached across the country against the sins of modern life. He was firmly opposed to the teaching of evolution.*

Document D: New York Times Article (ORIGINAL)

Cranks and Freaks Flock to Dayton: Strange Creeds and Theories are Preached and Sung within Shadows of the Court House . . .

Visitors for the Opening Day of the Scopes Trial are Mostly Tennessean Mountaineers.

Dayton, Tenn., July 10. Tennessee came to Dayton today in overalls, gingham and black to attend the trial of John Thomas Scopes for the teaching of evolution. The Tennesseans . . . came from mountain farms near Dayton, where work, usually begun at day light, had been deserted so that gaunt, tanned, toil-worn men and women and shy children might . . . see William Jennings Bryan's "duel to the death" with "enemies of the Bible." . . .

They overflowed the crowded courtroom, where only the earliest comers found seats, onto the great lawn of the court house shaded by newly white-washed maples and newly planted with strange pipes, where one pressed a button and bent to drink for relief from the sun which beat down upon the village. . . .

They stood in groups under the trees, listening to volunteer and lay evangelists, moved by the occasion to speak for the "Word." The listened to blind minstrels, who sang mountain hymns and promises of reward for the weary and faithful, to other minstrels who sang of more worldly songs, and to a string quartet of negroes. They walked up and down hot, dusty Market Street, with its squat one and two story buildings, hung with banners, as for a carnival in which religion and business had become strangely mixed, lined with soda-water, sandwich and book stalls.

Source: *Excerpt from a front page New York Times article, "Cranks and Freaks Flock to Dayton." July 11, 1925. The New York Times editorials sided with the defense and criticized Dayton's small-town mentality. Dayton's population in 1925 was 1,800.*