

September 29, 1875, President Ulysses S. Grant [speaking](#) to the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Army of Tennessee: “Leave the matter of religion to the family circle, the church and the private school, supported entirely by private contribution.” Amen and Amen!

President U.S. Grant had been the final commander of the Union Army during the Civil War. No doubt he had a close-up view of the bloodbath, havoc, and destruction inherent in the Civil War. For certain he would have formed convictions on what caused the war and steps the nation must take to avoid a repeat of such war.

It should not be surprising that Grant emerged from the war experience with a strong conviction that a good common school system is essential.

Grant certainly would have observed that the South was lacking a common school system, while the North was in the process of perfecting a common school system.

His advice and admonition regarding the common school is as relevant and essential today as in the 1870s, possibly more so.

“Let us all labor to add all needful guarantees for the more perfect security of free thought, free speech and a free press, pure morals, unfettered religious sentiments and of equal rights and privileges to all men, irrespective of nationality, color or religion. Encourage free schools, and resolve that not one dollar of money appropriated to their support, no matter how raised, shall be appropriated to the support of any sectarian school. Resolve that either the State or nation, or both combined, shall support institutions of learning sufficient to afford to every child growing up in the land the opportunity of a good, common school education, unmixed with sectarian, pagan or atheistical tenets. Leave the matter of religion to the family circle, the church, and the private school, supported entirely by private contribution. Keep the Church and State forever separate. With these safeguards I believe the battles which created us "The Army of the Tennessee," will not have been fought in vain.”

Those who are working to destroy the common school system either have not learned from history or realize that the destruction of the public common school is necessary to accomplish their goal of creating a permanent underclass.