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Why Have You Received this Paper?

Overlooking exit 97 on Interstate 24 is an old Confederate cemetery. A website for "Tennessee's Backroads Heritage", in an article on the Battle of Hoover's Gap, makes the following statement:

"In 1866, the local citizens began moving the remains of Confederates who had been buried where they fell to the hillside cemetery. In death, these soldiers occupy the hill for whose capture they gave their lives. This cemetery is noted as the first official Confederate Cemetery and remains as a silent reminder of this not so civil war." <http://www.tennesseebackroads.org/hover.htm>

This cemetery contains the grave of a Revolutionary War soldier, a handful of named soldiers, a larger number of unknown soldiers, and perhaps some civilians. From the hill on which the cemetery is located, one can view the meetingplace of the Beech Grove congregation.

The Civil War, described by some as the "War of Northern Aggression" and by others as the Southern rebellion, was a terrible time of death and destruction, taking the lives of about 365,000 men. Bitter feelings had been stirred, brother against brother, and neighbor against neighbor, and even after the war officially ended, the bitterness threatened to prevent healing and a return to normalcy.



On May 9, 1865, **Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest** gave some sound advice to his Cavalry Corp at Gainesville, Alabama, urging them to re-enter civilian society honorably. His words are inscribed on a monument at Beech Grove Confederate Cemetery:

"Civil war such as you have passed through naturally engenders feelings of animosity, hatred, and revenge. It is our duty to divest ourselves of all such feelings, and so far as it

is in our power to do so, to cultivate friendly feelings toward those with whom we have so long contested and heretofore so widely but honestly differed.

Neighborhood feuds, personal animosities, and private differences should be blotted out, and when you return home, a manly, straight-forward course of conduct will secure you the respect even of your enemies.

I have never on the field of battle sent you where I was unwilling to go myself, nor would I now advise you to a course which I myself felt unwilling to pursue. You have been good soldiers. You can be good citizens."

<http://kenthomashomepage.homestead.com/DedicationandFarewellorder.html>

In *Romans 12: 17-21* the Bible teaches us to develop good relationships with others: (17) Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (18) If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (19) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

It is in the interest of fostering friendly feelings between the Beech Grove congregation and the other residents of our community that we have sent this paper, *House To House/Heart To Heart*, at our own expense. We hope that you will enjoy it, consider the good information that it contains, and feel free to contact us about what we believe and why we believe it. It is our purpose to be a congregation that you can count on to encourage the study of the Bible and the proper application of its teachings. Please give us feedback in regard to what you read here, and let us know how we might be of service to you.

—Kenneth L. Thomas,
Preacher