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**HISTORY**

**MONTH**





Eli Johnson claimed that when he was threatened with 500 lashes for holding prayers meetings, he stood up to his master and declared, In the name of God why is it, that I can't after working hard all the week have a meeting on Saturday evening? I'll suffer the lash to be dragged off my bones...for the sake of my blessed Redeemer."

Fugitive slave James Smith, while still enslaved in Virginia, joined the Baptist Church and felt a call to preach to his fellow slaves. To prevent him from preaching, his master kept him tied up all day on Sundays and, when he proved intransigent, flogged him as well. Nevertheless, Smith kept up his ministry as best he could and later reported that "many were led to embraced the Savior under his preaching.

The husband of Candace Richardson, ex-slave from Franklin County, Mississippi, stole off to the woods to pray, "but he prayed so loud that anybody close around him could hear," and so was discovered and punished. The fact which Mrs. Richardson proudly stressed was that "beatings didn't stop my husband from praying. He kept on praying and it was his prayers," she explained to W.P.A interviewers and "a whole lot of other slaves that caused you young folks to be free today.

The prayers of the poor slaves, are proven to have had great value, in the minds of their Master, in scores of ways. They argued, and begged, coaxed and threaten, broke up meetings, punished, to make them pray 'fo' de confederates,' It is proven to have been so from the fact that so many refer to it, as a known fact in so many incidental ways; for instance

'Massah say, pray for de war, say we shouldn't, mus' pray for de 'fed'rates. We pray mo', pray harder. Den dey wouldn't let we hab meetin's, broke up de meetin's but didn't broke our hearts, we pray mo' and mo', in de heart, night and day, and wait for de Lord to come to hasten his work'.

A deeply pious ex-slaved said....'I pray dat God bless you, and gib you success! Massah angry, but mus' pray for de comin' ob de Lord, an' his people.'

Another said, 'I knew God would bless you, an' give victory, I feel it when I pray. Massah angry cause I prayed for de North, can't help it mus' pray for the whole worl'. Massah say, 'No! Pray for de 'fed'rates. But I knew God would bless de North.

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