

**MEMOIR OF ANNA
WILLIS: LATE OF
JERICHO, L. I.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649262236

Memoir of Anna Willis: Late of Jericho, L. I. by Thomas Willis

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THOMAS WILLIS

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MEMOIR

OF

ANNA WILLIS,

(LATE OF JERICHO, L. I.)

BY HER FATHER,

THOMAS WILLIS.

NEW-YORK:

JAMES EGBERT, PRINTER, 374 PEARL-STREET,
(SUCCESSOR TO M. DAY'S PRESS.)

1854.

MEMOIR OF ANNA WILLIS.

IN the dispensations of an over-ruling Providence, another bereavement having fallen to my lot, by the decease of my beloved daughter Anna Willis, I feel disposed to preserve a memorial concerning her; desiring that the review of her pious and exemplary life may prove an incitement to others, (especially her junior survivors,) to pursue the same path of fidelity and obedience.

In very early life she gave evidence of a clear sense and discrimination of right and wrong, and of propriety of conduct amongst her little schoolmates, to whom she was an excellent example.

As a daughter she was affectionate and dutiful, no act of disobedience to her parents being recollected, and scarcely an omission of filial duty: on one occasion, however, when a little girl, having yielded to the temptation of eating a few berries given to her in charge for her mother, she was soon after observed to be weeping, in consideration of her unfaithfulness, and that it was then out of her power to fulfill that duty.

This tendering visitation of Divine love illuminating her understanding, was probably remembered with instruction to herself in years then to come—her

youth being characterized by remarkable integrity and conscientious regard for truth, which, with increasing years, expanded into a watchful care, faithfully to discharge her various duties, however in the cross to her natural will.

About her sixteenth year, her aged grandmother, Anne Willis, being suddenly removed from works to rewards, her sensitive mind was thereby deeply affected, and brought under more serious reflection upon the necessity of so living under the influence and government of the Truth, as to be in readiness to meet the solemn change that awaits us all.

From this time it became her increased concern to seek a more intimate acquaintance with the God of her salvation, and to know his redeeming love to cleanse her soul from all impurity; in the course of which refining dispensation, she had many struggles and proving baptisms to pass through, unknown to the common observer. Notwithstanding her circumspect walk thus far, her natural temper, vivacity of mind, and love of this transitory world, doubtless needed to be brought more fully into subjection to, and acquiescence with, the Divine will; her sense of which, and of her short coming, is set forth in the following lines, entitled, "My Confession,"—written during partial convalescence from lingering weakness:

I stood upon a barren mount,
 Far from the pasture and the fount
 Which once allured my longing sight,
 Which once I tasted with delight;
 And learned for these, but dross to count
 Fair pleasure scenes, though e'er so bright.

When thus I'd left the narrow way,
 And wandered on till far astray ;
 Then with corroding cares oppress'd,
 With anxious doubt and fears distress'd,
 I oft bemoaned the hapless day
 I left the fold of peace and rest.

But fast the spoiler held his prey,
 The guilty victim of delay,
 Until my shepherd's rod was laid,
 In mercy, on that victim's head :
 Then groaning 'neath affliction's sway,
 There seemed a promise sweetly made,

To raise again this trembling frame,
 To bless and praise his Holy name,
 If I would but resign the will
 That proved, e'en now, rebellious still—
 As when an oft rekindling flame
 Defies full long the fireman's skill.

I yet rebelled, ah ! wretched one !
 Was mercy now for ever flown ?
 No, for 'twas mercy followed still,
 His gracious purpose to fulfil,
 To bid me trust in Him alone,
 And to subdue this wayward will.

'Twas then my frail and trembling form
 Bowed low, to meet the righteous storm :
 Then came an hour of deep distress,
 On this ungrateful one to press :
 But mingled kindness strove to warm
 The heart accustomed to transgress.

Yet long this vain and treach'rous heart
 Presumed to act the rebel's part ;
 Then did His judgments follow too ;
 Then did His chastening rod pursue,
 My fondly cherished plans to thwart,
 And fix my hopes on him alone.

But can the Ethiop change his skin,
 Become what ne'er before he's been ?
 Can Leopard cast his beauteous spot,
 Upon a form that wears it not ?
 Then may the captive, bound in sin,
 Cast off her chains to be forgot.

At length the struggling captive cried,
 " O let my soul in thee confide,
 My God, my Saviour, and my guide !
 For thou canst gain the victory,
 And set the fast bound captive free ;
 Canst lead her on through paths untried,
 And bring the wand'rer back to thee.

" Tho' long the conflict, and severe,
 Still, thou, my gracious Lord, wast near ;
 Yes, and in times of deep dismay,
 Thy power didst wond'rously display,
 This drooping, aching heart to cheer,
 And turn the darkness into day !

" For all I bless thee, O my God !
 Supporting staff, and chast'ning rod ;
 Let both be welcome still to me,
 If they but bring me nearer thee ;
 Teach me to tremble at thy nod,
 And help me every sin to flee.

"Before, I bowed to meet thy stroke,
 Now let me bend to wear thy yoke :
 O lead me in thy holy way,
 And let me go no more astray,
 Since thou the captive's bond hast broke,
 And from the foe, hast torn his prey,

"Now, O thou high and holy One !
 I pray thee, let thy will be done
 In this my tenant house of clay ;
 Subject me to thy righteous way,
 And crown with joy my setting sun,
 When evening closes o'er my day."

Such was her sincerity and dedication that faith and patience were granted, strengthening her to persevere through all her secret exercises, and in good measure to fulfil the injunction of her Lord and Master, "when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance—but thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Thus she was enabled to be cheerful with her friends, and her conversation oft-times was engaging and instructive.

Though affable and free, yet inwardly watchful, she was a lover of retirement, and of reading the Holy Scriptures and meditating thereon ; and a concern rested on her mind, especially with advancing years, not only for the observance of a little time of quiet in the morning, with the daily reading of the Scrip-

tures in the family, but also for the frequent assembling of the family in the twilight or evening of the day, silently to wait upon the Lord.

In the performance of her domestic, social, and relative duties, she was kind and respectful to all; and, it is believed, gained the esteem of all who knew her,

When under bodily infirmity, of which she had considerable, she evinced much patience and resignation; believing that as she rightly improved under affliction, all would work together for her good.

After a partial recovery from one of those seasons, she presented her parents with the following address:—

O had I but a poet's fire,
 To you I'd tune affection's lyre,
 To wake some tender strain;
 But ah! what now shall be my theme?
 Can we indulge in joyous dream,
 Beneath affliction's reign?

My Parents! Oh! what can I say,
 When she who hop'd to be your stay
 In your declining age,
 Shorn of her strength, a burden proves
 To those whom most on earth she loves,
 In life's incipient stage?

And when fond Hope her lamp has trimm'd,
 How oft its lustre has been dimm'd
 By disappointment's breath!