

## Anna Maria Schürman (1607-1678)

One of the most brilliant women that ever lived, was born on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Her name was Anna Maria and she lived in Utrecht in Holland. On the right you can see a picture of her. It is a picture scratched on metal with a special tool. She made this picture herself. In the picture you can see she is holding some writing. The writing explains that she did not do her own picture because she was vain. She had never made a picture of this type before and she did not want to begin with a picture of an important person in case she did it badly.



Anna Maria was a **pol-y-math**. That means she was good at many different things. She was good at art, music, mathematics, geography and astronomy. She also understood fourteen languages, including the old languages Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Aramaic, and Ethiopic. How did she learn these things? Her father taught her at home with her brothers. As she got older she wrote letters to the clever men. She also spent time talking to a neighbour who was a university professor. In those days only boys went to study at university. But Anna Maria was the first girl to study at a university in Holland.

Anna Maria wrote about how she came to trust in the Lord Jesus. When she was a little girl of four she was with her nurse. They were sitting on the banks of a stream. Her nurse had learnt some important questions and answers about the Bible. The first question was: *What is your only comfort in life and in death?* The nurse had learned the Christian's answer to that question which begins: *That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Anna-Maria's nurse repeated this answer to her as they sat by the stream. How these words struck little Anna-Maria's mind! From that moment, she too trusted Jesus Christ to be her faithful Saviour. She remembered that moment for the rest of her life.

As she grew up, Anna Maria's became famous as a learned woman and an artist. Her home became a meeting place for scholars and artists. She became known as the

“Star of Utrecht.” She herself did not call herself a “star.” She said her gifts came from God.



Anna Maria joined a group of Christians who wanted the church to be more faithful to the Bible. They were hated by their neighbours and had to wander from place to place. At last someone gave them a home, Castle Waltha. It is no longer standing but you can see it in this old picture. As you can see, it was not a real castle. It was a large stone building with three floors. This was their last home. The country people received them gladly. At last they were allowed to remain in peace. Here Anna Maria van Schürman died, aged 71.