

## WILLIAMS, PETER (1723 - 1796), Methodist cleric, author, and Biblical commentator

**Name:** Peter Williams  
**Date of birth:** 1723  
**Date of death:** 1796  
**Spouse:** Mary Williams (née Jenkins)  
**Child:** John Williams  
**Child:** Peter Bailey Williams  
**Child:** Eliezer Williams  
**Parent:** Elizabeth Williams (née Bayly)  
**Parent:** Owen Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Methodist cleric, author, and Biblical commentator  
**Area of activity:** Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** Gomer Morgan Roberts

Born 15 January 1723 at West Marsh, Llansadwrn, Carmarthenshire, son of Owen and Elizabeth Williams. He was educated at Carmarthen grammar school; while there, after listening (1743) to a sermon preached by George Whitefield, he was converted. He was for a short time a schoolmaster at Cynwyl Elfed. He was ordained deacon in 1745 and became a curate successively at Eglwys Gymyn, Swansea, Llangrannog, and Llandysilio Gogo, but his Methodism got him into trouble in his parishes and the bishop refused to make him a priest. He joined the Methodists in 1747 and began to tour the country, preaching. In 1748 he married Mary Jenkins of Llanlluan and, before long, settled at Gelli Lednais, Llandyfaelog, where he died 8 August 1796. **Eliezer** and **Peter Bailey Williams** were his sons.

Peter Williams was one of the outstanding leaders of the Methodist movement in Wales. He was also a writer and a poet. His hymns are to be found in *Rhai Hymnâu ac Odlau Ysprydol*, 1759, and *Hymns on Various Subjects*, 1771; he also published elegies on **William Davies** of Neath, 1787, and on **Daniel Rowland**, 1790. His chief books are *Blodau i Blant*, 1758; *Galwad gan wyr eglwysig*, 1781; *Cydymaith mewn Cystudd*, 1782; *Yr Hyfforddwr Cymreigaidd*, 1784; *Y Briodas Ysbrydol*, 1784; *Ymddygiad Cristianogol*, 1784. He also adapted and translated a number of English books. He had something to do with the publication of *Trysorfa Gwybodaeth, neu, Eurgrawn Cymraeg*, the first Welsh periodical, 1770, but the question whether he or **Josiah Rees** was its editor has not yet been decided.

His life's greatest achievement was the publication of successive editions of the *Bible*, each chapter having its own separate commentary. The first edition was published and sold out in 1770 and there were calls for many more editions. '*Beibl* Peter Williams' was tremendously popular in Wales for several generations and many thousands of copies were issued at one time or another. In 1773 he published the *Mynegeir Ysgrythurol*, which was a great help to the Welsh folk in their study of the *Bible*. His commentary on John, i, 1, aroused the suspicion that he was inclining to Sabellianism, but it was after his publication of a Welsh edition of John Canne's '*Little Bible*' (1790) that the storm broke. He was accused of publishing the Sabellian heresy and at the Llandeilo C.M. Association, 1791, was excommunicated. He spent the last years of his life in bitter controversy with the Methodists, and it was during this period that his last books were published. They were: *Llythyr at Hen Gydymaith*, 1791; *Tafol i Bwysio Sosiniaeth*, 1791; *Dirgelwch Duwioledeb*, 1792; and *Gwreiddyn y Mater*, 1794.

### Author

**Reverend Gomer Morgan Roberts**, (1904 - 1993)

### Sources

Owen Williams, *Cofiant, neu Hanes bywyd a marwolaeth y Parchedig Peter Williams, o Gaerfyrddin* â€; *Wedi ei gasglu a'i gyfieithu* (Caernarfon 1817)

St. George A. Williams, *The English works of the late Rev. Eliezer Williams, M.A., Vicar of Lampeter and Caio cum Llansawel* â€; *with a memoir of his life* (London 1840)

*Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*, vi, 35; xxxiv, 49

the manuscript sources are given in G. M. Roberts, *Bywyd a Gwaith Peter Williams* (Cardiff 1943)

### Further Reading

J. Morgan Jones a W. Morgan, *Y Tadau Methodistiaidd (1895-1897)*, i, 433-458

Wikipedia Article: [Peter Williams](#)

## Works

Daniel Rowlands, Peter Williams, *Pumtheng araith ar amryw destynau* (Caerfyrddin 1762)

David Tucker, Peter Williams (ed.), *The Dial of Ahaz spiritualized* (Carmarthen 1770)

David Tucker, Peter Williams (ed.), Hugh Hughes (trnsl.), *Deial Ahaz, wedi ei hysprydoli* (Caerfyrddin 1773)

Peter Williams, *Cywydd o goffadwriaeth, ar farwolaeth y Parchedig Mr. William Davies, o Gastell-Nedd, a fu farw y 17 o Awst 1787... Ynghyd a rhai pennillion o goffadwriaeth Jane Williams, o Gaer-Wen, Ymhlwyf Penbre...* (Caerfyrddin 1787?)

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