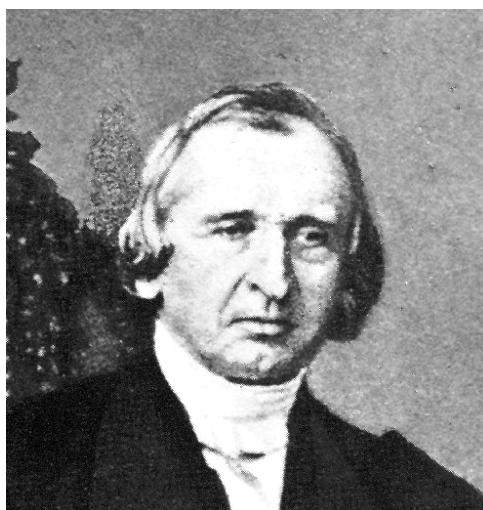


## Adolphe Monod and Louis Vallette



Louis Vallette (1800-1872)

Jean Louis André Vallette was born on May 24, 1800, in Chêne-Bougeries, a Swiss village on the border to Savoy (France). Having lost his father when he was young, he worked for some time as a tutor for the Boissier-Butini family in Geneva, which supported him in his studies. When studying theology in Geneva, he made friends with Antoine Vermeil (1799-1864), who later founded the community of the deaconesses of Reuilly, and with Frédéric, Billy and Adolphe Monod<sup>1</sup>.

Monod mentions Vallette in several letters, and part of their correspondence has been conserved. The atmosphere of these letters is quite intimate; Adolphe opens his heart to his friend and tells him of the difficulties and struggles he faces.

In his letter of October 24, 1824 Monod mentions a sermon by Vallette, which appears to have troubled the latter. Monod also expresses his regrets that Vallette has not met Thomas Erskine and cites an English author he wishes to study<sup>2</sup>.

The letter of September 24, 1825 has been written after Monod had returned to Paris. In this letter Monod expresses the idea that Vallette should not refrain from heterodox thoughts lest he become “orthodox by bias”. He describes what he intends to study and expresses the difficulties he encounters in his study of the epistle to the Romans. Then Monod speaks about Switzerland and refers to himself as “Adolphe without a homeland”<sup>3</sup>.

Soon after having become the pastor of the French-speaking church of Naples in 1825, Adolphe looked for a successor. His friend Vallette appeared to be the right person. In his letter of March 15, 1827, Monod, who was then still the pastor of the church in Naples, wrote to his sister Adèle:

---

<sup>1</sup> Gustave Lagny, *Le Réveil*, p. 73

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 51

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 72

“... I still have not found my successor. My friend and fellow student Vallette has offered to replace me, but despite my burning desire to reclaim my liberty I did not dare to encourage him before discussing the matter with Mr Cellérier. ...”<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to his parents dated May 23, 1827, he also mentions his correspondence with Vallette: “... I have told you that I have written a letter to Vallette on May 15. I expect to have his answer between June 10 and 12. ...” At that time, his replacement by Vallette appears to have been certain, because Adolphe Monod wrote:

“I cannot tell you how happy I will be to leave Naples. It will be a pleasure of feeling and of conscience. If Vallette cannot come in July, if I have to wait until November, or even beyond – o my God, I hate to think of that possibility!

However, if God, who does not depend on time and who can illuminate and touch a soul in a few days, a few weeks or a few months, wishes to convert me to the Gospel in the short amount of time until my departure, so that I can believe with all my heart and understand this faith to be the only thing that is necessary, perhaps I better stay in Naples because my flock is strongly attached to me and lets me know now that I will be leaving soon, such that I might have regrets, if I could regret leaving. But this assumption is unlikely; furthermore my preference is for teaching and leads me away from the pulpit, so I think that I will let Vallette come anyway. Let us see, and not get lost in conjectures. May God bless you and lead me!”<sup>2</sup>

In a notice dated June 17, 1827, Adolphe Monod mentions a letter he had written to Louis Vallette a few days before, in which he had expressed his intention of “thoroughly studying the history of Italy and of the Italian language”<sup>3</sup>.

As planned, Louis Vallette replaced Adolphe Monod as pastor of Naples in October 1827, and stayed there until 1841. His successor Frédéric Tissot said of him:

“If Adolphe Monod is to be considered the founder of our community, he was not its organiser. He was only passing and doing good, very much like the Master. The real organiser was a man who was less brilliant but also of considerable merit: Louis Vallette.”<sup>4</sup>

Monod kept in touch with his successor, as can be seen from two letters dating from the period of Adolphe Monod’s ministry in Lyons. Their tone is friendly; now the two friends have one more common interest: the parishioners of Naples.

In a letter dated September 3, 1828, Monod apologises for not having answered Vallette’s letters before. He questions his friend about the importance of orthodoxy for piety, expresses his fear that he might “indulge in theology and metaphysics, to which I am irresistibly inclined” and asks for advice. In the second part of the letter Monod asks about several members of the church in Naples<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 110

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 112

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 99

<sup>4</sup> F. Tissot, *Notice historique*, p. 32

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Monod, *Correspondance*, p. 32-37

In his letter of August 18, 1829, Monod informs Vallette of his marriage with Hannah Honyman (1799-1868) and tells him about the increasing difficulties he encounters in his dealings with the Lyons church council, which has asked him to resign<sup>1</sup>.

Around the year 1836, after the departure of his colleague Christian Friedrich Bellermand, Louis Vallette was appointed principal chaplain of the church in Naples, “despite his Swiss origins”<sup>2</sup>. His activities were manifold. Besides his pastoral duties, Vallette improved his Hebrew with a Jewish scholar, became a voluntary chaplain for the Swiss regiments, established a sort of local church council, organised a school for boys and another for girls as well as a boarding school ...<sup>3</sup>

In 1836 Louis Vallette married Pauline Appia (1815-1889), the older sister of the future pastor Georges Appia (1827-1910). Appia remembers this event:

“I was about nine years old when pastor Louis Vallette arrived from Naples. It did not take him long to fall in love with my older sister Pauline. When he asked me whether I agreed to give him my sister, I told him that I would rather give him my squirrel. He chose to ignore that offer. Within three weeks they were engaged, got married and left, because he wanted to be reunited with his flock in Naples, where there was a cholera epidemic. The councillors of the Frankfurt church were quite impressed when he told them why he wanted to accelerate the formalities.”<sup>4</sup>

In Naples Louis Vallette himself was also infected with cholera<sup>5</sup>.

In 1837, he proclaimed the gospel in Messina; the establishment of a French evangelical church in that city rewarded those efforts<sup>6</sup>.

Even when Adolphe Monod was a professor in Montauban, the two men still corresponded from time to time.

In his letter of July 10, 1839, Monod answers a letter of Louis Vallette in which the latter appears to have mentioned the possibility of leaving Naples. Monod advises to wait for God’s clear guidance and not to become active, except in prayer: “All you have to do is wait and pray.”<sup>7</sup>

In a letter to Louis Vallette dated March 12, 1840, Adolphe Monod wrote:

“... I take this opportunity to catch up and ask you about the Church. Does the work of the Lord prosper in the desert? Oh, please greet on my behalf my old friends in Naples, who remember my stay amongst them, and whom I will never forget. Above all, please express my heartfelt greetings to my excellent friends Comte. I fear that they might think that I am ungrateful, because of my silence,

---

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 159

<sup>2</sup> F. Tissot, *Notice historique*, p. 34

<sup>3</sup> F. Tissot, *Notice historique*, p. 35-37

<sup>4</sup> Georges Appia, *pasteur et professeur en Italie et à Paris, 1827-1910. Souvenirs réunis par sa famille*. Tome premier, Paris, Flammarion, s.d., p. 33s

<sup>5</sup> F. Tissot, *Notice historique*, p. 37

<sup>6</sup> F. Tissot, *Notice historique*, p. 33

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Monod, *Correspondance*, p. 265s

but my heart certainly is not ungrateful. The current of my occupations carries me away, and I have hardly any time for writing letters other than those related to my work. Tell me about M. C., his wife and the child they adopted. Greet the Meuricoffre<sup>1</sup>, the two Autran, the Audra, etc., etc. I will cherish whatever you tell me. Proverbs 25.25<sup>2</sup>. How often I think that I would like to see Naples again before I die! ...”<sup>3</sup>

This is the last trace of correspondence between the two men in our possession.

In 1841, Louis Vallette received a call to become a pastor of the (Lutheran) Billettes parish in Paris, alongside Louis Meyer (1809-1867). Tissot mentions that Louis Vallette was “called to Paris because the Duchess of Orléans, who had chosen him as her personal chaplain, had expressed the desire”<sup>4</sup>. The Duchess in question is Hélène de Mecklembourg-Schwerin (1814-1858), the daughter-in-law of the king Louis Philippe I<sup>5</sup>.

As Adolphe Monod also had accepted a call to Paris in 1847, one may think that the two men had many opportunities to meet in the capital.

Louis Vallette was at the origin of the Lutheran *Mission Intérieure* and participated in a great number of institutions of evangelisation, assistance and help as well as in the military chaplaincy. It is him who in 1854 launched a fundraiser so that protestant soldiers could be accompanied by chaplains of their confession<sup>6</sup>.

When Adolphe Monod was dying in 1856, Vermeil was among those who accompanied him. The book *Les adieux* cites the names of the pastors presiding the religious offices that were organised around the dying pastor: “Mr Frédéric Monod, Guillaume Monod, Meyer, Grandpierre, Gauthey, Vaurigaud (of Nantes), **Vallette**, Armand-Delille, Vermeil, Fisch, Jean Monod, Edmond de Pressensé, Petit, Paumier, Zipperlen, Hocart, Louis Vernes, Boissonnas and Vulliet.”<sup>7</sup>

His colleague Antoine Vermeil, who also was a friend of Adolphe Monod, involved Vallette in the young institution of the Deaconesses from the very beginnings. At first, Louis Vallette was Vermeil’s deputy, but soon he became the vice-president of the executive board (1842-1846) and then the direct successor of Vermeil as president (1864-1872)<sup>8</sup>.

Louis Vallette died on October 20, 1872; his last words were: “All in Him, all for Him, all by Him!”<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Meuricoffre (Mörikofer) is the name of a family of Swiss-Neapolitan bankers. Oscar Meuricoffre (1824-1880) was the secretary of the Swiss consul in Naples in 1846 and dealt in particular with the Swiss soldiers that were stationed in the city. He was consul of Frankfurt in Naples (1855) and, together with his brother, he took over the family’s bank and trading firm (1856). In his capacity as general agent of Switzerland in Naples (1858) he was in charge of the dissolution of the Swiss regiments based in Naples. See the corresponding entry in the *Dictionnaire historique de la Suisse*.

<sup>2</sup> Like cold water to a weary soul / is good news from a distant land.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Monod, *Souvenirs*, p. 123

<sup>4</sup> F. Tissot, *Notice historique*, p. 37

<sup>5</sup> Gustave Lagny, *Le réveil*, p. 73

<sup>6</sup> Encrevé, *Protestants*, p. 564s

<sup>7</sup> *Les adieux*, p. III (our emphasis)

<sup>8</sup> Gustave Lagny, *Le réveil*, p. 74

<sup>9</sup> Gustave Lagny, *Le réveil*, p. 73

Louis Vallette had several children: Charles (1837-1842), Marie Emma (1839-1910), Wilhelmine Charlotte Emma (1840-1880), Oscar (1843-1883 ; assistant pastor in Basel), Cécile Anne (1845-1912) and Charlotte (1847-1922).

His daughter Marie married William Monod (1834-1916), the only son of Adolphe Monod. One of the daughters of Marie, Madeleine Monod (1874-1963) married the Latinist Paul Vallette (1872-1953), the oldest son of Oscar Vallette (and thus Madeleine's cousin).

The Vallette branch of the Monod family still exists today.

Sources:

- Sarah Monod, *Adolphe Monod, I. Souvenirs de sa vie. Extraits de sa correspondance*, Paris, Librairie Fischbacher, 1885, 479 p. A partial English translation is available : *Life and letters of Adolphe Monod, pastor of the Reformed Church of France*, London, J. Nisbet & Co., 1885, 426 p.
- Sarah Monod, *Adolphe Monod, II. Choix de lettres à sa famille et à ses amis*, Paris, Librairie Fischbacher, 1885, 514 p. For the English translation, see previous item.
- *Les adieux d'Adolphe Monod à ses amis et à l'Eglise*, Meyrueis, Paris, 1856, 191 p. An English translation is available: *Adolphe Monod's Farewell to His Friends and to the Church*, R. Carter & Brothers, 1858, 183 p.
- Frédéric Tissot, *Notice historique sur l'Eglise évangélique française de Naples*, Lausanne, 1892, 48 p.
- Gustave Lagny, *Le réveil de 1830 à Paris et les origines des diaconesses de Reuilly*, Paris, Association des diaconesses, 1958, 195 p. (re-published in 2007 by Editions Olivetan)
- André Encrevé, *Protestants français au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Geneva, Labor et Fides, 1986, 1121 p.