

SHOULD THE METHODISTS GET ALL THE CREDIT? THE METHODIST CRISIS IN NEUCHÂTEL, 1820-1830

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On December 26, 1820, at the request of the “Class” or “Company of Pastors,”¹ the Conseil d’État (Council of State) of the Principality of Neuchâtel (then part of Prussia) agreed to intervene with all of its authority to quell any disturbances made by the Methodists. This carefully worded statement urged caution and wisdom on the part of the “Class” but promised support as needed.

This is the text of the decision as officially recorded by the Council of State:

The Council has taken into very serious consideration on various occasions petitions that have been addressed to it by the honorable Dean and Ministers of the Class about the unrest that has already been caused in this country, by a sect whose views appear to correspond with those of the English Methodists, and especially with one that at this time in Geneva functions under the name of New Church. The honorable Dean and Ministers of the Class added in these petitions the narrative of what they did to stop the unrest which it is, and they conclude by calling for the support of the Council’s authority and that of the luminaries to help reach the goal they propose, which is to maintain the established religion, and prevent that the Church from being divided by opinions that might excite more disorders of which the length and gravity are difficult to predict. It is in response to these petitions that the Commission announces to the honorable Dean and Ministers of the Class, that the Council expects, with confidence in the prudence and wisdom of the Company of Pastors, that it will take the most appropriate steps to maintain in all its integrity Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline, increase the zeal of pastors, and revive religious sentiments among us, and that in all cases where public order is disturbed, and the rules of our holy religion violated, the State Council, as its duty compels it, will speak with au-

¹ The “Company of Pastors,” the “Class” or the “Venerable Class” appear to be equivalent in both primary and secondary sources related to Neuchâtel history.

thority, and prosecute similar disorders to the fullest extent of the law.²

The “Methodist” crisis in Neuchâtel clearly caused anxiety and fear among the Class, the guild of clergy that dominated the city. It is important to note that the Methodist Crisis was not provoked by missionaries from England. There were no known missionaries of the English (or American) Wesleyan movements in Neuchâtel during the early nineteenth century, and none are mentioned in British, Neuchâtel, or related sources. Yet the text makes the connection. There are perceived similarities between the English Methodists and the problematic “Methodists” in Neuchâtel, which also have things in common with the separatist “New Church” (Réveil) in Geneva. Certainly, Swiss citizens took their religion seriously. In 1839, the university appointment of David Friedrich Strauss at Zürich led to the overthrow of the government and death of a Council member; in the 1830s ruffians threatened missionary society meetings in Lausanne which Claude Bovet-Felss protected; and the Bovet family protected the Salvation Army from rioters in Neuchâtel during 1883. The forethought of the Council of State was certainly warranted.³

This essay explores the nature of the “Methodism” in Neuchâtel during the period, and to indicate its political, theological, sociological, and educational ramifications. The question is: What were the fears of the Class that would be taken seriously by the Council of State? And, should the

² *Manuel du Conseil d'État*. Com: le 1er Janvier. Fin: le 30 Décembre. Tom 169, Archives d'État, Neuchâtel. CP 33/169: pages 1025-1026: 26 Décembre 1820: “Le Conseil a pris à diverses reprises en très sérieuse considération les remontrances que lui ont adressé Les Sieurs Doyen et Ministres de la Classe, au sujet des troubles qu’a déjà occasionnés dans ce pays, une secte dont les opinions paraissent avoir des rapports avec celle des méthodistes anglais, et surtout avec celle qui prend en ce moment à Genève le titre de nouvelle Église: Les Sieurs Doyen et Ministres de la Classe ajoutent dans ces remontrances le récit de ce qu’ils ont fait pour arrêter les troubles dont il s’agit, et ils concluent en réclamant du Conseil le concours de son autorité et celui de ses lumières pour les aider à atteindre le but qu’ils se proposent, qui est de maintenir la Religion établi, et d’empêcher que l’Église ne soit divisée par des opinions qui ne pourraient qu’exciter de plus en plus des troubles dont il est difficile de prévoir le terme et la gravité. C’est en réponse à ces remontrances que le Conseil annonce aux Sieurs Doyen et Ministres de la Classe, que le Conseil attend avec confiance de la prudence et de la sagesse de la Compagnie des Pasteurs, qu’elle prendra les mesures les plus convenables pour maintenir dans toute son intégrité la Doctrine chrétienne et la Discipline Ecclésiastique, augmenter le zèle des Pasteurs, et ranimer parmi nous les Sentimens religieuses, et que dans tous les cas où l’ordre public serait troublé, et les règles de notre sainte Religion violées, le Conseil d’État, comme son devoir l’y appelle, interviendra par son autorité, et réprimera de semblables désordres avec toute la sévérité des lois.” Unfortunately, as far as can be ascertained, the document submitted to the Council of State by the Class has not been preserved. The Class affirmed and expressed gratitude for the decision: *Actes de la Classe*, Archives d’État, Neuchâtel, Vol. 15, 597 (591)-598 (592), 03 Janvier 1821.

³ On Zürich see Theodore M. Vial, *Liturgy Wars: Ritual Theory and Protestant Reform in Nineteenth Century Zurich* (New York: Routledge, 2004); on the Lausanne meetings, see Arthur Grandjean, *La Mission romande: Ses racines dans le sol suisse romand. Son épanouissement dans la race thonga* (Lausanne: G. Bridel; Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1917), 7-8; on the Salvation Army see Josephine Elizabeth Butler, *The Salvation Army in Switzerland* (London: Dyer, 1883) and James Straton, *The Maréchale: Founder of the Salvation Army in France and Switzerland* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1913).

Methodists get all the credit for the controversy? The argument is that the reaction to the “Methodists” is the culmination of a century-long process of the Class losing influence in Neuchâtel. The major factors in that process are described below. The second goal is historiographical. The Réveil in Francophone Protestantism has often been described as a synthesis of Pietism and Wesleyan Methodism.⁴ What was meant by “Methodism” in the context of early nineteenth-century continental European revivalism? This essay is a case study of the “Methodist” contribution to what became known as the Réveil as well as to the “Methodist” history of Neuchâtel.

The Fears of the Neuchâtel Reformed Pastors and the City Government in 1820

After the Protestant Reformation in Neuchâtel, the Class eventually established a sort of theocracy, and with their relatives in the bourgeoisie managed the city and canton, which became a part of Prussia, by choice, in 1707. Neuchâtel was unable to remain isolated from religious, economic, intellectual, and social trends within Europe.⁵

Migration: Cultural and Religious Diversity in the Canton

The identification of the “Methodists” as English in the above document accented their foreignness and otherness.⁶ However other foreigners had already arrived in Neuchâtel, despite efforts to keep Anabaptists, Pietists, and Catholics out of the Canton. There had been significant migrations for more than a century. These began with the Huguenots before, but especially after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The French refugees with their own ecclesiastical traditions, initially impoverished and in need of social assistance, brought craft skills, business acumen, and eventually capital to the city, as well as international business connections within the French *diaspora*? The economic power of the city shifted. The large former Catholic cathedral, then the Reformed citadel overlooking the city, was

⁴ On the French Réveil, see André Encrevé, “Le Réveil en France (1815-1850),” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme en France* 155 (2009), 529-540; Daniel Robert, *Les Églises Réformées en France 1800-1830* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961); as well as Émile Leonard, *Déclin et renouveau*, 3; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964); Alice Wemyss, *Histoire du Réveil, 1790-1849* (Paris: Les Bergers et les Mages; Lausanne: Librairie de l’Ale, 1977); André Encrevé, *Les protestants en France de 1800 à nos jours: Histoire d’une réintégration* (Histoire et Société, 8; Paris: Stock, 1985); André Encrevé, *Protestants Français au milieu du XIX^e siècle. Les réformés de 1848-1870* (Paris: Labor et Fides, 1986); Sébastien Fath, *Du Ghetto au Réseau: Le Protestantisme en France (1800-2005)* (Paris: Labor et Fides, 2005).

⁵ For a complementary analysis of threats to the power of the Class during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Michèle Robert, “Discipline et ordre moral: La lutte de la Compagnie des Pasteurs pour conserver un pouvoir (XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles,” in *Cinq siècles d’histoire religieuse neuchâteloise* (2009), 293-305.

⁶ The term “Methodist” was later used in France for any Réveil person or initiative, in an effort to insist that it was foreign to France. See the comments of André Encrevé, *Le Protestantisme Français au milieu du XIX^e siècle* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1986), 102-103.

no longer sufficiently large, and a French Huguenot church was developed down in the business district. Other migrants, primarily Anabaptists and Catholics, came into the nearby Valangin Valley as laborers and farmers. Rural clergy expressed alarm against the lower class “heretics,” but the authorities in Neuchâtel appear undertook little or no action.⁷ The Valangin Valley was removed from the center of power in the Collegial Church (the former Cathedral) in Neuchâtel.

The Catholic influx into Neuchâtel came after 1707, to work in the businesses established by the increasingly prosperous bourgeoisie. Catholics were considered more threatening, and intense efforts were made to contain what was perceived to be a threat to the ethos of the city. The program for containment came to naught because of the intervention of Berlin. The Class and Council of State attempted to limit Catholics by offering a worship location that was too small and insisted that all aspects of visible Catholic practices and spirituality be undertaken only in that space. They initially stopped the Catholics from purchasing ground for a Catholic cemetery. These restrictions on religious freedom were overturned by the Prussian government, and the Canton and clergy were obliged to conform to the decrees of Berlin. The final arrangement was approved by the Prussian government in July of 1822.⁸

Another long-term problem for the Class was the establishment of a Moravian community at Montmirail, just outside Neuchâtel.⁹ This community was conceived by Moravian carpenter John David as a refuge and social assistance center for French Huguenot and Waldensian refugees. It was made possible by the long-standing friendship of property owner Frédéric de Watteville and Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf. The project was energetically opposed by the Class. The Prussian King intervened, reprimanding the Class for agitating against the project and insisting that they respect diversity

⁷ Conseil considérant les inconvénients qui peuvent résulter de ce que les Anabaptistes ne font pas inscrire sur les registres de Paroisse de leur domicile, leurs mariages et la naissance de leurs enfants, *arête*, Conseil d'État, Château de Neuchâtel, 20 nov. 1809, signed by Georges de Rougemont Archives d'État, Neuchâtel. See Charles Châtelain, “Les anabaptistes au Val-de-Ruz au XVIII^e siècle,” *Musée neuchâtelois* (1883), 147-155, 180-189; Maurice Dumont, *L'Anabaptisme en pays neuchâtelois* (Thèse de licence, Neuchâtel, 1937), Charly and Claire-Lise Ummel, *L'Église anabaptiste en pays neuchâtelois* (La Chaux de Fonds: Éditions d'en Haut, 1994); and Michel Ummel, “Les premiers contours d'un anabaptisme neuchâtelois autour d'un certain Pierre Pelot,” *Cinq siècles d'histoire religieuse neuchâteloise: Approches d'une tradition protestante* (dir. J.-D. Morerod, L. Petris, P.-O. Léchet et F. Noyat; Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, 54; Neuchâtel: Université de Neuchâtel, 2009), 121-137.

⁸ *Actes de la Classe* 15, 511 (505) 16 fév. 1819; *Actes de la Classe* 15, 517 (511) 5-6 mai 1819; *Actes de la Classe* 15, 600-602 (594-596) 7 fév. 1821; *Actes de la Classe* 16, 75-78, 2 avril 1823.

⁹ Eugène Reichel, *Les missions moraves, leur origine, leur organisation et leur développement* (Montmirail: n.p., 1866); Ernest-Arved Senf and Eugène Reichel, *Souvenir du jubilé missionnaire de l'Eglise des Frères célébré à Montmirail le 21 août 1882* (Peseux: Bureau du Journal de l'Unité des frères, 1882); Florence Hippenmeyer, *Montmirail: évolution d'un site* (Le Locle: Gasser, 2002).

and religious tolerance. He forced the Canton to accept the Moravians.¹⁰ By the time opposition of the Class was overcome, the need for refuge had vanished. Montmirail became solely a Moravian community. The community worship attracted others from the area and the continued ire of the Class.¹¹ Opposition was often intense. Zinzendorf did not dare visit for decades because of the threats of violence. The Montmirail was interpreted as a Pietist offensive against Neuchâtel.¹²

Social pressure and attractive opportunities at other Moravian settlements gradually decreased the number of residents at Montmirail. In 1766, a new venture was undertaken. It became a residential school for girls. This was designed to teach young women more than they could generally learn at home, in a safe caring Pietist/Moravian environment. Several families of the bourgeoisie and haute-bourgeoisie, for example the Bovet family from Areuse/Boudry, sent daughters to Montmirail. There the girls were taught French language and composition, German, religion, mathematics, music, geography, as well as sewing, needlework, and lace-making. This was combined with physical exercise and worship.¹³

Postcards from the 1830s portray the elegant, chaste young women in a beautiful pastoral and institutional context.¹⁴ It was the new vision of the European bourgeoisie for women: educated, but still focused on the home. A similar education was provided for young men at other Moravian centers to prepare them for futures in international business. There was nothing that those against education for women could do to stop the influence of the Pietist Moravian communities.

Eventually pastors, whose ministries were threatened by the “discipline” of the Class, made their way to Montmirail and became part of the outreach of that community, notably several men of the large well connect-

¹⁰ W. Senft, *Ceux de Montmirail. Esquisses historiques* (Neuchâtel, Paris: Delachaux et Nestlé, 1947), 6-40; texts of the letters from Berlin to authorities in Neuchâtel are provided, pp. 23 and 30.

¹¹ W. Senft, *Ceux de Montmirail*, 71-107; and, Charles Châtelain, “Montmirail et la Vénérable Classe” *Musée neuchâtelois* (1892), 79-84.

¹² On the persecution of Pietists led by Osterwald, see the problematic work of Pierre Barthel, *Jean-Frédéric Osterwald, l'Européen, Novateur Neuchâtelois* (Genève: Éditions Skatline, 2001), 473-510. On a primary opponent of the Moravians, see Charly Guyot, *La Vie intellectuelle religieuse en Suisse Française à la fin du XVIIIe siècle: Henri-David de Chaillet, 1741-1823* (Mémoires de l'Université de Neuchâtel, 21; Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1946).

¹³ W. Senft, *Ceux de Montmirail*, 108-142; *Souvenir du jubilé séculaire de Montmirail, les 6 et 7 octobre 1866* (Montmirail: n.p., 1866); *Montmirail et les Frères moraves: 250 ans d'histoire* (Saint-Blaise: Unions chrétiennes, 1972).

¹⁴ André Bovet, “Montmirail en 1832 d'après une vue de G. Lory, le fils,” *Musée neuchâtelois* (1931) 197-199 regarding the image, viewed 29/10/14 at <http://bpun.unine.ch/icono/JPG01/PANE2.17.jpg>. Also lithographs by Jean-Henri Bauman, <http://bpun.unine.ch/icono/JPG01/PANE2.16.01.jpg> and (1845) <http://bpun.unine.ch/icono/JPG01/PANE4:08.01 to .04>.

ed bourgeois Petitpierre family.¹⁵ It is unclear when the Pietist conventicle system spread into the city of Neuchâtel, but Jean-Henri Grandpierre stated that his father, a member of the bourgeoisie, was involved as early as 1815.¹⁶ The conventicles, without the benefit of approved clergy, encouraged prayer and worship among the laity. The presence of the Moravians provided competition in spirituality for the Class, as well as in education. The Moravian influence on the bourgeoisie was especially troublesome because of the increasing social power of that class.

Indicative of the fear of Class of the “foreign” was their reaction to Henri-François Juillerat.¹⁷ Juillerat, born in Le Locle in the Canton of Neuchâtel, served as pastor in Nîmes, France (1807-1816). Because of the terrible persecution of Protestants in the early nineteenth century in Nîmes, being especially vulnerable as foreign born, Juillerat needed to remove his family for safety.¹⁸ He wrote the Class, saying that he and his brother needed to leave the city because of persecution (which was well known throughout Europe), asking if there might be a place for him in the Neuchâtel. The Class refused to consider him, stating that the constitution of the Class did not allow consideration of his request.¹⁹ Juillerat became Pastor (1816-1867) of the most prestigious Protestant church in Paris, the Oratoire du Louvre, and the long-term President of the Paris Consistory (1834-1867). Jean-Henri Grandpierre, one of the young Neuchâtel “Methodists,” became his assistant (1851), then also titular pastor at the Oratoire (1856-1872) and succeeded him as President of the Consistory (1867-1872). Juillerat was quietly supportive of the Réveil but worked with assistants and others with widely diverse perspectives.

Education in the Canton and of the Clergy

Among the parts of civic and cultural life fiercely controlled by the Class

¹⁵ Charles Châtelain, “Montmirail et la Vénérable Classe,” *Musée neuchâtelois* (1892), 79-84. See the example of the Bovet family discussed by, Pierre Bovet *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp. Entre la fabrique indienne et la communauté religieuse* (Grandchamp: n.p., 1965), 1-27 et passim. See also Alexandre Dafflon, “Neuchâtel, ses gouverneurs et le refuge huguenot dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle,” *Bulletin de l'Association Suisse pour l'histoire du Refuge Huguenot* 28 (2007-2008), 6-22.

¹⁶ Jean-Henri Grandpierre, *Les Souvenirs de quelques années de ma vie*. Ms. Neuchâtel. Archives d'État. Bibliothèque des Pasteurs: 4 Past.117, 6. The original draft was written between April and June 1873. The ink has faded. A second version, which is easier to read, apparently edited by Fanny Grandpierre, omits certain details, especially names. When this essay was ready for publication, a transcription of Grandpierre's manuscript was published by André Encrevé, “Mémoires du pasteur Jean-Henri Grandpierre (1799-1874): ‘Les souvenirs de quelques années de ma vie,’” *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 161 (2015), 245-281, 395-422. A third portion is forthcoming. Subsequent references will be to the Encrevé transcription.

¹⁷ On Juillerat, see Daniel Robert, “Juillerat, Henri-François (dit Juillerat-Chasseur),” in *Les Protestants*, éd. André Encrevé (*Dictionnaire du monde religieux dans la France contemporaine*, dir. J.-M. Mayeur et Y.-M. Hilaire, 5; Paris: Beauchesne, 1993), 270.

¹⁸ On Nîmes, see Pierre Petit, *Une métropole protestante en Languedoc: Nîmes, 1802-1848* (Nîmes: Lacour, 1989).

¹⁹ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 422, 6 déc. 1815.

from the Reformation to the early 1800s was education. In general, the Class had long been opposed to most secular education. They generally opposed the education of women. In all cases, they insisted that the clergy conduct the examinations. The formation of the clergy was controlled by the Class, which as a guild established the educational and other criteria for entering the profession. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), educational opportunities for Protestant ministerial candidates were not available in France, but institutions were developed in Geneva and Lausanne. Sons of Neuchâtel's developing bourgeoisie were moving into the clergy, uniting the economic powers of the Canton and the Church. They and their lay contemporaries needed a sophisticated educational system. The re-establishment of the College of Neuchâtel, as well as scholarly theological education, were opposed by the Class but happened through the intervention of the King of Prussia.²⁰

The Cautionary Tale of Geneva

By 1820, Geneva had experienced turmoil as Réveil adherents struggled for freedom of worship within and then outside the Reformed Church. Efforts of the Genevan establishment to control discussion and to isolate the revivalists only exacerbated the conflict.²¹ The worst nightmare of the Neuchâtel Class was that the Moravian/Pietist style conventicles would develop into separatist congregations. The Moravians and others had studiously avoided separatism, while being separate. The well-known trajectory of the groups in Geneva, especially under the inflexible influence of César Malan, was toward establishing new "pure" congregations.

Thus in 1820, the Class felt under attack with regard to immigrants, the resulting religious and cultural diversity, new forms of spirituality and ecclesiastical organization, and correctly perceived their control of education slipping away. The most dangerous up to 1820 were the Catholics and the Pietist Moravians of Montmirail, the latter with their international religious and business networks and royal Prussian protection. The turmoil in Geneva gave them a vision of what could happen because of the Réveil. The fear became more intense as the "Methodist" Réveil surfaced among Neuchâtel clergy.

²⁰ Education in Neuchâtel has been discussed by Henri DuBois, et alia, *L'Enseignement de la théologie à Neuchâtel, XVIIe, XVIIIe et XIXe siècles jusqu'en 1873* (Neuchâtel: Attinger Frères, 1899; Jean-Daniel Burger, "Les Études de théologie en pays Neuchâtelois," *Musée Neuchâtelois*, ns. 31 (1944), 3-14, 51-54; and, *Histoire de l'Université de Neuchâtel*, 3 vols. (Neuchâtel: Gilles Attinger à Hautrive, 1988, 1994, 2002).

²¹ There is an extensive literature. See the ideological analysis of Alice Wemyss, *Histoire du Réveil* and the very helpful essay of Timothy C. F. Stunt, "Diversity and Strivings for Unity in the Early Swiss Réveil," *Unity and Diversity in the Church. Papers Read at the 1994 Summer Meeting and the 1997 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1995), 351-362.

“Methodism” Infects Neuchâtel Clergy

The Class focused on a particular group of young clergy: Frédéric-Guillaume Clottu, James (Jacques Auguste) du Pasquier, and Abraham-François Pétavel. On November 1, 1820, all three of these persons were charged by the Class with holding unauthorized religious meetings and were forbidden to hold further meetings.²² All three were actively working to encourage spirituality and revive the churches, adapting the practice of the Pietist conventicles with awareness of the Geneva version of revivalism known as the Réveil; all three individuals presented the Class with complicated political situations. Note that this interdiction was less than two months before the decision of the Council of State at the behest of the Class on December 26, 1820. It did not end the controversy. All three were again the subjects of censure on July 4, 1822,²³ and the battle between the Class and the “Methodists” did not stop there. Each case is examined separately.

Frédéric-Guillaume Clottu (1798-1830) was admitted as a theological student in 1814, successfully completed his exams, studied for a year in Lausanne (1818-1819), and was given his final examinations by the Class.²⁴ He was offered an appointment in June, 1820, (it is unclear which one) and then hired as a teacher by the Bovet family in Areuse/Boudry near Neuchâtel from at least early 1823.²⁵ Because of his “Methodism,” the Class decided that no more persons born illegitimate and legitimized would be accepted into the clergy.²⁶ He was confronted by the Class about his “mysticism” and warned about promoting new ideas promoted in the Canton. He was called before the Class; astonishingly, based on his answers, they ordained him.²⁷ He then preached a sermon in Neuchâtel. The Class was scandalized that he made minor changes to the liturgy and did not use the Osterwald translation of the biblical text. He was severely reprimanded.²⁸

After serving the Bovet family for at least two years, and again being ac-

²² *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 591, 1 nov. 1820. This text was reproduced by Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 26.

²³ *Actes de la Classe*, 16, 49-50, 4 jul. 1822.

²⁴ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 400, 1 nov. 1814; *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 430, 2 jul. 1816; *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 500 (494), 16 sept. 1818. On Clottu, see the brief (9 page) study with biographical information: Elie Tauxe, *Un poète religieux et hymnologiste originaire de Cornaux: Frédéric-Guillaume Clottu (1798-1830)* (Neuchâtel: Impr. P. Attinger, 1927) a revised and expanded version of the same in *Journal religieux des Églises indépendantes de la Suisse romande* 27 (2 juillet 1927), 106, and 28 (9 juillet 1927), 110. See Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 25-43.

²⁵ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 566 (560), 6 juin 1820. The February, 1823, date was suggested by Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 25 and 30. Bovet states that Clottu was an important influence on the Bovet family in their overt move into the Réveil. However, many family members were already heavily involved with the Moravians of Montmirail and Neuwied and with the Pietists in Stuttgart and Frankfurt am Main.

²⁶ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 573 (567), 4 juillet 1820.

²⁷ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 577 (571), 2 aug. 1820.

²⁸ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 579 16 août 1820; *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 581 (577) 20 sept. 1820.

cused of meeting with conventicles, he was subjected to a trial by the Class.²⁹ Having the support of the Bovet family, there was no way to defrock him, but after the trial he was not appointed to a church. His revivalist activities throughout Switzerland, often in cooperation with persons funded by the Continental Society in Geneva, and consequent problems with the Class, continued. He was again put on trial on April 27, 1824, for Réveil activities.³⁰ Astonishingly, given the tone of the discussion, the Class agreed, at the request of Pastor Jeanneret of La Chaux du Milieu, to appoint Clottu as assistant pastor.³¹ The difficult relations with the Class continued until Clottu's death. When he became terminally ill, he was cared for by Miss Turner of the Continental Society, who, expelled from Neuchâtel, took him to other refuges with support from the Bovet family. He died at Yverdon on March 9, 1830. A volume of his hymns was compiled by friends and went through at least three editions by mid-1831.³² Clottu was the most persecuted of the three, because his family was not in a position to protect him from the Class.

James (Jacques) Auguste du Pasquier (1794-1869) was related to the Bovet family. His grandmother was Sophie-Louise Bovet, daughter of Henri-Louis Bovet.³³ A member of a bourgeois family, he neither studied at the struggling College of Neuchâtel, nor did he ask permission from the Class to study theology. He studied in Geneva (1811-1813). His father, Claude-Abram du Pasquier (also in the printed cloth industry like the Bovet family), appeared before an assembly of the Class to ask that James du Pasquier be admitted as a "student in theology" if he did well on his Geneva exams.³⁴ When the Class acceded to the request, he was already studying theology in Berlin (1813-1816).³⁵ On his way to study more in Geneva (1816-1817), he brought letters of recommendation from professors at Berlin and gave a lecture to the Class on January 8, 1816.³⁶ During a second sojourn in

²⁹ *Actes de la Classe*, 16, 191-229 7 jul. – 3 Nov. 1824 (many meetings with continuing discussions).

³⁰ *Actes de la Classe*, 16, 366-367, 27 avril 1824. The Continental Society was an English mission organization dedicated to bringing the Evangelical Revival to continental Europe.

³¹ *Actes de la Classe*, 16, 266, 2 mars 1825. This appointment indicates the Class was not monolithic!

³² Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 42-43. Frédéric-Guillaume Clottu, *Cantiques de feu F.-G. Clottu, ministre du saint évangile, suivis de vingt autres* (3rd ed.; Neuchâtel: J.-P. Michaux, 1831). I have not located the first two editions, nor could Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 43, note 1. Bovet noted Clottu hymns in the Swiss Reformed hymnals; some are also in French Reformed ones.

³³ Du Pasquier has been little studied. See Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 26-31, *et passim*. Gottfried Hammann, "James du Pasquier: Pasteur, Doyen de la Classe et Président du Synode (1794-1869)," *Biographies neuchâteloises* 2 (1998), 107-110.

³⁴ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 372, 5 mai 1813.

³⁵ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 383, 2 nov. 1813.

³⁶ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 438, 5 nov. 1816 ; *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 442, 8 jan. 1817. The dates of his time in Geneva are vague. He may have been there during the 1817 crisis when Malan's March, 1817, sermon against current Protestant theology and theologians provoked the Genevan Reformed edict of May 3rd forbidding the mention of sensitive theological issues from the pulpit. On the events and context, see Timothy C. F. Stunt, "Diversity and Strivings for Unity in the Early Swiss Réveil," in *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (1995), 351-362.

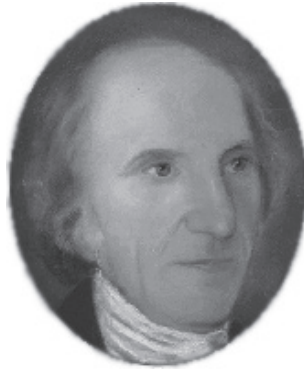


Image from painting of Abram-François Pétavel (1791-1870). Accessed online <http://epelorient.free.fr/petavel.html>.

Geneva, du Pasquier lived in the home of César Malan, prominent leader of the Réveil.³⁷ Returning to Neuchâtel, du Pasquier requested (October 1, 1817) ordination, having finished exams in Geneva, and was ordained a few days later.³⁸ He became the Assistant Pastor (1818-1823) at Boudry, home church of the Bovets; there he became friends with Clottu.³⁹ It was while serving there that he and Clottu became involved in the conventicles at the home of Pétavel (see below) in Bôle.

Du Pasquier went on to become an important leader of the Reformed church in the Canton. He served as pastor at Môtiers (1823-1827) and at Neuchâtel (from 1831). He became secretary (1828) and then the last Dean of the Class (1844-1848). After the 1848 revolution he became the first President (1849-1865) of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Neuchâtel. He was committed to missions. The day before being charged with “Methodism” by the Class, he appeared before them and asked for and received permission to collect funds for the Basel Mission.⁴⁰ From 1826-1869 he was President of the Société neuchâteloise des missions.⁴¹ He remained committed to the Réveil.

Abram-François Pétavel (1791-1870) returned to Neuchâtel as a Berlin Ph.D. rationalist. In an effort to develop support among the Class for the newly rejuvenated college, he asked for and was granted honorary membership in the Class and was later assigned to administer the Greek and Hebrew examinations to theological students.⁴² The son of the Secretary of the City,⁴³

³⁷ Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 27.

³⁸ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 468 (462), 1 oct. 1817; *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 471 (465).

³⁹ Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 27, 41.

⁴⁰ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 584 (581), 31 oct. 1830.

⁴¹ Gottfried Hammann, “James du Pasquier,” (1998), 107-110. He represented the Neuchâtel Mission Society in Paris, see for example: “Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris: Trente-neuvième Assemblée Générale,” *Journal des missions évangéliques* 38 (1863), 158.

⁴² *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 393, 3-4 mai 1814; *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 410, 26 avril 1815.

⁴³ Pierre Bovet, *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp* (1965), 27.

he was, in his own right and by heritage, one of the most prominent citizens of the city. In early 1820, he experienced a Pietist conversion. During earlier studies at Geneva, he had contact with the circle of Madame de Staël, a fervent Pietist during that period, and a supporter of the Continental Society.⁴⁴

With the fervor of a new convert, Pétavel began to organize Pietist conventicles in his home in Bôle for prayer and Bible reading without the involvement of the local pastor. The revivalist activities of the three young men and Miss Turner became widely known. Alexandre Vinet, in a letter to a friend, described them as “wandering fools . . . Methodists,” stating that Pétavel believed himself a “little John the Baptist.”⁴⁵ Complaint was made to the Class, and the “Pétavel affair” began.⁴⁶ In December, 1820, Pétavel submitted a written sermon to the Class for approval and was refused permission to preach it.⁴⁷ It is unclear from the *Actes de la Classe* how, after being confronted again in 1824, Pétavel resolved his problems with the Class. He spent the rest of his career as professor and administrator at Neuchâtel.

Why were the “Methodists” Feared? What Credit Should They Get?

Should the “Methodists” get the credit for disturbing the peace in Neuchâtel? What was “Methodist” about the Réveil in Neuchâtel between 1820 and 1830? The dearth of direct English Methodist influences suggests that other similarities were seen, not only by the Class, but by others, including scholars such as Alexandre Vinet. It was well-known that the Methodist Church began as a renewal movement and separated from the Church of England. The Methodist preoccupations of evangelism, mission, and the doctrine of sanctification or “Christian Perfection” were controversial parts of Methodist identity. In England, the power of the Methodist critique of the Church of England had been recognized and slowly fostered ecclesiastical and social reforms. The Neuchâtel Class and Council were content with its shared theocracy and feared “Réveil” might inflict change.

The Wesleyan Methodists and the Neuchâtel “Methodists” took their arguments to the nominal Christians. Supported by elements of the bourgeoisie, they developed conventicles (like the Pietists, also like the Methodist class meeting) to renew the church, without permission of the local clergy. Neuchâtel “Methodism” was not based on Farel, Osterwald, or Turretin, but on theology and spiritual practices of the Pietists and Moravians, with some parallels to the Methodists John Wesley and John Fletcher. This study draws into question the received scholarly wisdom that the Réveil is a synthesis of

⁴⁴ Gottfried Hammann, “Abraham François Pétavel (1791-1870),” 361-362 (re. Staël), 368-369 (re. conversion); “Abraham-François Pétavel,” *Véritable Messager Boiteux* (1872), 42.

⁴⁵ Alexander Vinet to Louis Leresche, 27 and 30 September, 1820, cited in Eugène Rambert, *Alexandre Vinet: Histoire de sa vie et de ses ouvrages* (4ième edition, préface de Ph. Bridel; Lausanne: Georges Bridel & Cie, 1912), 61-61. The identification of individuals mentioned are confirmed by Pierre Bovet *Un siècle de l'histoire de Grandchamp*, 27-28.

⁴⁶ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 591 (585)-593 (587), 1 nov. 1820.

⁴⁷ *Actes de la Classe*, 15, 593 (587), 6 déc. 1820. No information about the sermon has been found.

Pietist and Wesleyan theology. This is a matter that needs further investigation on the basis of a wider sample.

At the crux of the matter would appear to be the ability of the Reformed Church of Neuchâtel to deal constructively with modernity. In a changing, diversifying society, the control by the Class was falling short of citizens' expectations with regard to education, personal piety, political ambitions, international connections, and social and personal ethics; there was no modern social and intellectual leadership. Some of the bourgeoisie were willing to support the Réveil and dissident spirituality over against the Class and to pursue education outside its supervision. By eventually accepting the "Methodist" generation of Neuchâtel youth into the Class, the Class chose to pursue inclusiveness, and therefore the Neuchâtel Protestants were arguably better prepared than their co-religionists in Geneva and Lausanne to face modern cultural cataclysms such as the 1831 and 1848 revolutions.

So the Methodists should receive some credit as precursors of the Neuchâtel Réveil and for providing a model by which it might be interpreted. They should not get credit for the threat to civic peace in Neuchâtel on the day after Christmas, 1820.