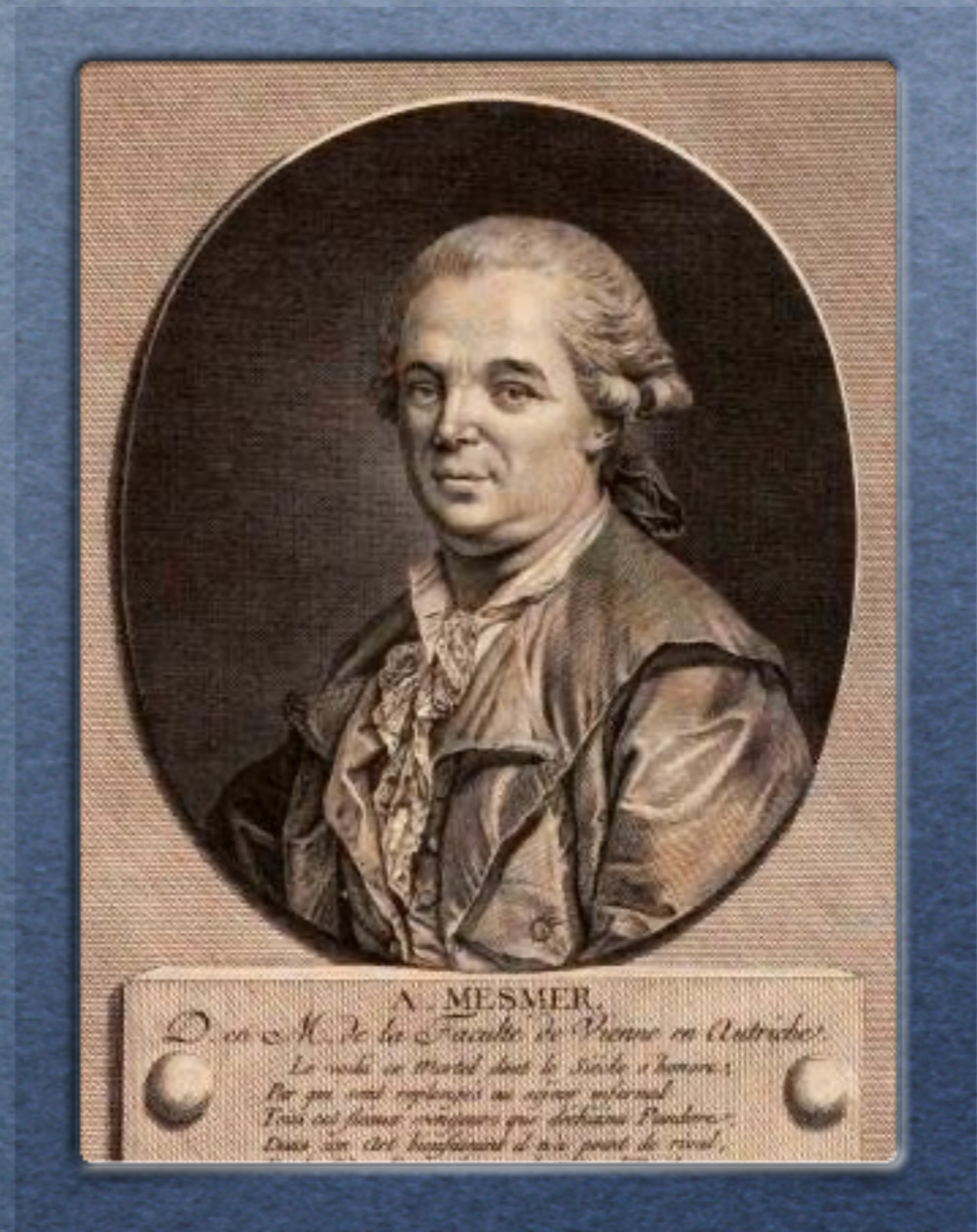


Franz Anton Mesmer

1734–1815

German physician who theorized the existence of a natural energy transference occurring between all animated and inanimate objects which he called animal magnetism, sometimes referred to as mesmerism.



Mesmerism

Mesmer's theory attracted a wide following between about 1780 and 1850, and continued to have some influence until the end of the 19th century.



In France, around 1780, many Parisians believed in curing their illnesses by magnetism. To perform this cure, they sat in a group around a tub containing “mesmerized” water and iron filings; this was part of the cult introduced to Paris by Dr. Franz Mesmer. He proclaimed that animal magnetism of the human body controlled the flow of a universal fluid through the body and that illness resulted when there was an obstacle to that flow. The illness would be cured by magnetically redirecting the fluid with arrangements such as the filings and water.

A series of experiments were conducted to determine if there was evidence for such a fluid. But no evidence was found, and any benefit was attributed to imagination and the placebo effect.



Jimmy Emerson, DVM_flickr

Paris, Maine 1845

In the midst of my experiences in meeting fanaticism, I was subjected to a severe trial. If the Spirit of God rested upon anyone in meeting, and he glorified God by praising Him, some raised the cry of mesmerism; and if it pleased the Lord to give me a vision in meeting, some would say that it was the effect of excitement and mesmerism. (*CET 76.1*)

Grieved and desponding, I often went alone to some retired place to pour out my soul before Him who invites the weary and heavy-laden to come and find rest. As my faith claimed the promises, Jesus would seem very near. The sweet light of heaven would shine around me, and I would seem to be encircled by the arms of my Saviour, and would there be taken off in vision. But when I would relate what God had revealed to me alone, where no earthly influence could affect me, I was grieved and astonished to hear some intimate that those who lived nearest to God were most liable to be deceived by Satan. (*CET 76.2*)

Some would have had me believe that there was no Holy Spirit, and that all the exercises that holy men of God experienced, were only the effect of mesmerism or the deception of Satan. (*CET 76.3*)

Those who had taken extreme views of certain texts of Scripture, refraining wholly from labor, and rejecting all who would not receive their ideas on this and other points pertaining to religious duty, charged me with conforming to the world. On the other hand, the nominal Adventists charged me with fanaticism, and I was falsely represented as the leader of the fanaticism which I was laboring constantly to arrest. (*CET 76.4*)

Different times were set for the Lord to come, and were urged upon the brethren. But the Lord showed me that they would pass by, for the time of trouble must take place before the coming of Christ; and that every time a date was set, and passed, it would weaken the faith of God's people. For this I was charged with being the evil servant that said, "My Lord delayeth His coming." Matthew 24:48.

(CET 77.1)

**All these things weighed heavily upon my spirits, and
in the confusion I was sometimes tempted to doubt
my own experience. (CET 77.2)**



Doug Kerr_flickr

Johnson, Vermont 1850

Soon we returned to Vermont, and held a remarkable meeting at Johnson. On our way we stopped several days at the home of Brother E. P. Butler. We found that he and others of our brethren in northern Vermont had been sorely perplexed and tried by the false teachings and wild fanaticism of a group of people who were claiming entire sanctification, and, under the garb of great holiness, were following a course of life that was a disgrace to the Christian name. (*CET* 136.3)

The two men who were leaders in the fanaticism were in life and character much like those we met four years before in Claremont, New Hampshire. They taught the doctrine of extreme sanctification, claiming that they could not sin, and were ready for translation. They practiced mesmerism, and claimed to receive divine enlightenment while in a sort of trance. (*CET* 138.1)

They did not engage in regular work, but in company with two women, not their wives, they traveled about from place to place, forcing themselves upon the hospitality of the people. Through their subtle, mesmeric influence, they had secured a large degree of sympathy from some of the grown-up children of our brethren. (*CET* 138.2)

Brother Butler was a man of stern integrity. He was thoroughly aroused to the evil influence of the fanatical theories, and was active in his opposition to their false teachings and arrogant pretensions. Moreover, he made it plain to us that he had no faith in visions of any sort.

(CET 138.3)

Rather reluctantly Brother Butler consented to attend the meeting at the home of Brother Lovejoy at Johnson.

The two men who were the leaders in the fanaticism, and who had greatly deceived and oppressed God's children, came into the meeting, accompanied by the two women dressed in white linen, with their long black hair hanging loose about their shoulders. The white linen dresses were to represent the righteousness of the saints. (*CET* 138.4)

I had a message of reproof for them, and while I was speaking, the foremost of the two men kept his eyes fastened upon me, as mesmerists had done before. But I had no fear of his mesmeric influence. Strength was given me from heaven to rise above their satanic power. The children of God who had been held in bondage began to breathe free and rejoice in the Lord.

(CET 138.5)

As our meeting progressed, these fanatics sought to rise and speak, but they could not find opportunity. It was made plain to them that their presence was not wanted, but they chose to remain. Then Brother Samuel Rhodes seized the back of the chair in which one of the women was sitting, and drew her out of the room and across the porch onto the lawn. Returning to the meeting-room, he drew out the other woman in the same manner. The two men left the meeting-room, but sought to return. (*CET* 139.1)

As prayer was being offered at the close of the meeting, the second of the two men came to the door and began to speak. The door was closed against him. He opened the door and again began to speak. Then the power of God fell upon my husband. The color left his face as he arose from his knees. He lifted his hands before the man, exclaiming: "The Lord does not want your testimony here. The Lord does not want you here to distract and crush His people." (*CET* 139.2)

The power of God filled the room. The man looked terrified, and stumbled backward through the hall into another room. He staggered across this room and fell against the wall, then recovered his balance and found the door out of the house. The presence of the Lord, which was so painful to the fanatical sinners, impressed with awful solemnity the company assembled. But after the children of darkness had gone, a sweet peace from the Lord rested upon our company. After this meeting the false and wily professors of perfect holiness were never able to re-establish their power over our brethren. (*CET* 139.3)

The experiences of this meeting won us the confidence and fellowship of Brother Butler.

(CET 139.4)



Your Area, 2023

I also saw that God had messengers that He would use in His cause, but they were not ready. They were too light and trifling to exert a good influence over the flock and did not feel the weight of the cause and the worth of souls as God's messengers must feel in order to effect good. Said the angel, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." They can accomplish but little good unless they are wholly given up to God and feel the importance and solemnity of the last message of mercy that is now being given to the scattered flock. Some who are not called of God are very willing to go with the message. But if they felt the weight of the cause and the responsibilities of such a station, they would feel to shrink back and say with the apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (*EW* 62.1)

One reason why they are so willing to go is that God has not laid upon them the weight of the cause. Not all who proclaimed the first and the second angel's message are to give the third, even after they fully embrace it, for some have been in so many errors and delusions that they can but just save their own souls, and if they undertake to guide others, they will be the means of overthrowing them. But I saw that some who have formerly run deep into fanaticism would be the first now to run before God sends them, before they are purified from their past errors; having error mixed with the truth, they would feed the flock of God with it, and if they were suffered to go on, the flock would become sickly, and distraction and death would follow. (*EW 62.1*)

I saw that they would have to be sifted and sifted, until they were freed from all their errors, or they could never enter the kingdom. The messengers could not have that confidence in the judgment and discernment of those who have been in errors and fanaticism that they could have in those who have been in the truth and not in extravagant errors. Many, also, are too apt to urge out into the field some who have but just professed the present truth, who have much to learn and much to do before they can be right in the sight of God themselves, much less point out the way to others. (*EW 62.1*)

I saw the necessity of the messengers, especially, **watching and checking all fanaticism** wherever they might see it rise. Satan is pressing in on every side, and unless we watch for him, and have our eyes open to his devices and snares, and have on the whole armor of God, the fiery darts of the wicked will hit us. There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is "*present truth*" that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul. Satan will here take every possible advantage to injure the cause. (*EW 63.1*)