

THE JOURNAL OF IMMUNOLOGY

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The Integrity of the Body

A DISCUSSION OF MODERN IMMUNOLOGICAL IDEAS

By F. M. Burnet

This book, says the author, "was written primarily to provide the information about immunology that I should like to have if I were a botanist or a geneticist or a physician with the same avid curiosity about things as they were that I have as a microbiologist." Immunity is based on the demand for chemical and cellular consistency within the body, and thus has aspects that are deeper and more interesting than mere defense against infectious disease.

Geneticists and biochemists, particularly, have realized the special potentialities of antibodies as biologically labeled proteins that help to throw light on the process whereby genetic information carried in the chromosomes is eventually manifested in the synthesis of the proteins needed for the functioning of the organism. There are in addition many specialized applications of immunology in the other biological sciences.

The author describes with characteristic vividness the kinds of problems with which immunology is concerned today and the methods by which it seeks answers to them. Although he gives particular emphasis to the clonal-selection theory of immunity, of which he is the originator, he frankly says that "because it is so inherently simple, it is probably wrong." He explains other theories of immunity as well. He discusses both non-medical and medical applications of immunology and devotes several chapters to allergic disease and autoimmune disease. He concludes with some personal speculations into the deeper problems of biology—for instance, a somatic-mutation theory of aging, in which immunology may be expected eventually to be of service.

Sir MacFarlane Burnet is a recipient of the 1960 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine "for the discovery of acquired immunological tolerance," and author of *Virus as Organism* (Harvard University Press, 1945). \$4.75

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