Rom. 7:1-6). Through their obedience to the cry of the Baptist, which was "the counsel of God" (Lk. 7:30), they would have become God's people with the hope of resurrection to glory at the second advent of the Lord Jesus.

The command to believers under the new covenant, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17,18), applied equally to those in Samaria who were unequally yoked together with unbelievers, those who embraced a corrupted truth. The gift of God, the hope of eternal life, brings with it corresponding responsibilities. The gift cannot be separated from the test of faith. Jesus brought both the gift and the test to the Samaritan believers.

But what about Ephraim?

(To be concluded)

Another marvel of the human frame

David Burges

THE WONDERS and complexities of the human body are well known to us. The Creator made man "in His own image . . . male and female created He them", and consequently we are "fearfully and wonderfully made". One of the fundamental features of the body with which we are all familiar is the continuous circulation of the blood, first demonstrated by William Harvey in 1628. The marvellous organic pump which is the heart, the lungs which oxygenate the blood, together with the arrangement of arteries and veins, form a superbly designed system to circulate oxygen and essential nutrients to the tissues of the body. Here is a complex, life-sustaining arrangement which God has chosen in Scripture to represent the life of the person itself, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11).

The lymph system

Much less well known is another circulating fluid system that is equally vital to the healthy functioning of the body: the lymph system. The brief, simplified description that follows is, it is hoped, sufficient to convey just how extraordinarily complex is even this relatively unrecognised structure of the body, and how it bears all the hallmarks of intelligent design.

Lymph fluid originates from a component of the blood known as plasma. The plasma of blood flowing in the arteries is rich in nutrients for the cells. When it reaches the capillaries, the flow of blood is slowed so that plasma can leave and permeate the body tissues as so-called tissue fluid. Tissue fluid delivers the essential nutrients, oxygen and hormones required by the cells. It also collects and carries away some cellular waste products.

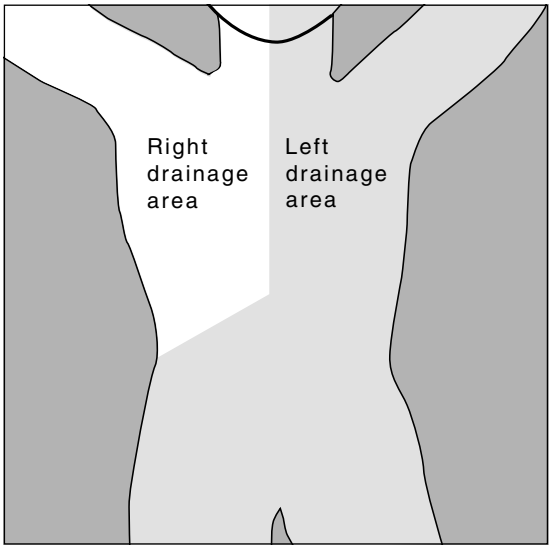
About ninety per cent of the tissue fluid returns to the capillaries, where it again becomes blood plasma and continues its journey throughout the body as part of the circulation through the veins. Lymph is the ten per cent of the tissue fluid that is left behind, amounting to one to two litres in the whole body.

The role of lymph

The function of tissue fluid is to deliver the nutrients to the cells. The role of lymph is to take out the waste products that are left behind, including dead blood cells, pathogens and cancer cells, and to dispose of them. It thus forms an essential component of the immune system. The lymphatic system collects this fluid by diffusion into lymph capillaries, and returns it to the veins via the lymph nodes, which filter the fluid to prevent bacteria entering the blood stream.

The lymphatic capillaries form a mesh-like network of tiny tubes that are distributed throughout the tissue spaces and are located just under the skin. These capillaries branch and interconnect freely so that they extend into almost all tissues in the body. The lymphatic system acts as a secondary circulatory system. Unlike the blood circulation system, the lymphatic system is not closed and has no central pump; the lymph moves slowly and under low pressure. Like veins, lymph vessels have one-way valves and depend mainly on the movement of skeletal muscles to squeeze fluid through them. Rhythmic contraction of the vessel walls may also help draw fluid into the lymphatic capillaries. This fluid is then transported to progressively larger lymphatic vessels before draining into veins in the circulatory system.

Lymphatic drainage is organised into two separate and very unequal drainage areas, the right and left, and normally lymph does not drain across the invisible lines that separate them (see diagram). The drainage vessels are known as the right lymphatic duct (for lymph from the right upper body) and the thoracic duct (for the rest of the body).



Other functions of lymph fluid

As well as performing this waste removal function, lymph is also involved in the digestion of food. Lymph vessels are present in the lining of the small intestine, and fats are passed to the lymphatic system to be transported to the blood circulation for processing by the liver.

Other organs forming part of the lymphatic system are the spleen, tonsils, thymus and the lymph nodes, which are active in the body's very complex mechanisms for signalling and fighting invasions by foreign micro-organisms, such as bacteria or pollen, referred to as antigens. Such antigens are transported from tissues into the lymph and carried to the lymph nodes, where they are processed by special substances and presented to immune cells known as lymphocytes. These start manufacturing antibodies, or serve as memory cells to recognise the antigens again in the future. The spleen also contains lymphocytes, which in this case filter the bloodstream rather than the lymph fluid. Thus the spleen has importance in fighting infections that have invaded the bloodstream.

Intelligent design

This much simplified summary of an unexpectedly vital part of the human body gives some indication how complex even the most obscure systems are, and also how interdependent all such processes are. Truly the human body is a complete unit, where no organ is without purpose and every part contributes to the healthy functioning of the whole. It therefore challenges credulity to suppose that any of them could just arise by random chance and successfully fit in with all of the others. The immune system, of which the lymph system forms a part, is vital for the survival of the body from infections, and was therefore essential as a complete working system from the outset.

The members of the scientific establishment scorn the concept of intelligent design by a supreme Creator, because they well understand the moral compulsion this would place upon them. Yet every structure of the human body, and the marvellous integration of each into the perfect whole, shouts the involvement of a designer, whose schemes are still beyond the capabilities of the finest scientists to understand. We, who have entered into covenant with the God of the Bible, recognise that designer as the Creator of heaven and earth, and marvel at the wisdom underlying everything He has made, especially ourselves: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Ps. 139:14).

Sources: www.lymphnotes.com/article.php/ and Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lymphatic_system).

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