

who have been brought up in Christadelphian families and have been sheltered from the world. This was the mistake which Dinah made: "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land" (34:1). This was the beginning of a downward spiral which led to her being defiled.

We should resist the temptation to even go and look longingly at the world. Dinah was a fellowcitizen of Jacob's household, but she was

tempted with the prospect of being a citizen of Shechem. Instead of looking at the things of this life we should be like Abraham, who "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God". To do this we need to have a clear view of what has been promised and prophesied in the Scriptures about God's coming Kingdom. The more we read and meditate upon God's Word, the stronger this view will become.

Modern technology: help or hindrance?

Ewan MacLeod

IN THE ABSENCE of prophets, seers and spirit-guided apostles, and in these days when there is "no open vision" (1 Sam. 3:1), the Bible is the only way that the disciples of Christ can learn about God and His plan for mankind. To this end, many Christadelphians have large personal libraries which would be the envy of past generations. Never has there been a time when "knowledge [is] increased" (Dan. 12:4) to the extent that it has in the past decade or so. Books have never been cheaper relative to people's income; in the developed world a copy of the Bible can cost as little as a single meal. With the invention of the Internet and World Wide Web, thousands of sites have sprung up that are of interest to those wishing to study God's Word.

Not only can Christadelphians borrow or obtain access to innumerable books from other brethren and sisters, from ecclesial libraries, or from the Christadelphian Office, but many CD ROMs have already been produced which give inexpensive access to decades-worth of books and magazine articles.

In addition, the Internet is an almost limitless resource waiting to be tapped at the click of a mouse. Almost all the historical works that Christadelphians could possibly want are available free on-line in one form or another. Huge numbers of books, booklets, articles and leaflets can all be downloaded. Some of these are no longer available in print. All the main Christadelphian publications now either have their own website or can be accessed on-line. Those who do not have a computer must surely know someone

who does. With modern technology making this amount of learning and literature available at minimal cost and effort, no other generation has had such easy access to such a vast amount of knowledge about God and His plan and purpose.

But is modern technology a help or a hindrance to learning about God's Word? Many will scarcely think about the question before replying that technology is a wonderful blessing and help in the Truth. Besides the immense volume of literature that is available to each one of us, Bible study software on computer makes looking up words and phrases in English, Hebrew and Greek a joy and a pleasure. Verses can be dropped directly into a word-processor rather than being re-keyed. Talks can be modified and reprinted. Overhead projector transparencies and study notes can be prepared and printed in colour or black-and-white with equipment that most home users of personal computers can afford. The list goes on and on. Could technology be anything other than a blessing?

On closer reflection, there is a danger that technology is moving our modern age further from what God requires from us. Our brethren in former ages had no computers or software, and probably only a Bible, a concordance, and a few books. No doubt they would take far longer to prepare an address; but in the process of poring over their Bibles, looking for a verse, searching the concordance, and copying out by hand what they found, they would become much more familiar with the Word of God than we do today. With no software to jump straight to a verse,

they would be forced to read the whole passage surrounding a verse, and browse other pages to find the verse they wanted. This would equip them with a knowledge of God's Word in its proper context that many lack today.

When Christ wanted to quote the verses in Isaiah that referred to himself, for example, he first "found the place where it was written" (Lk. 4:17). How many of us today, if handed a scroll of a large book of the Bible with no chapter or verse divisions, would be so familiar with the text that we could turn directly to any passage?

Perhaps the shift to modern technology can be seen in the light of that other great event in history: the move from a scroll (as used by Jews for thousands of years) to the codex, or book, form of the Bible. The book offered considerable advantages: more could be put in a given space, passages could be instantly turned to, and they were easier to produce. By comparison, the scroll was large, heavy, inconvenient, and made it difficult to look up passages. So why was the scroll ever used? And why did it persist for so long when the book was so much more convenient?

The answer must lie in the way God intended His Word to be studied. It was never intended that learning about God through His Word would be easy, quick or convenient. It was never intended that the disciple of God's Word should

'knock up' a quick address one evening, look up a few passages, print it off, then close the Book of Books and move on to something else. Instead, we need to pore over God's Word, to read and reread it, to meditate upon it and what it means, to savour its beauty, to fall in love with its timeless message, to pray that we understand and act upon what is written therein, to memorise it as best we can (Ps. 119:11), to reflect on our love for its Author, and to value what is hidden from so many.

For this, instant access is no advantage. We need to spend time thinking about each chapter in turn—figuratively to eat God's Word, so that it becomes an inseparable part of us (Rev. 10:9-11). Like Christ and many others before us, we need to make the time and effort to get God's Word off the printed page and into our hearts and minds, so that it motivates us and allows us to reflect God's glory. For this, modern technology can certainly help, but it is not necessary, and may even be a hindrance if we spend less time with God's Word as a result.

When our beloved High Priest returns to see what *you* have done in his absence, what will he find? Will *you* be studying his Father's Word, or will he find you distracted from it by the latest in modern technology? Which category will *you* be in after reading this article?

"And they had no child" (Lk. 1:7)

A Scriptural consideration of childlessness

Nigel Bernard

The aims of this article are:

- to consider some examples of couples in Scripture who were childless
- to help us to see some of the Scriptural teaching which applies to childlessness
- to provide exhortation for all brethren and sisters in relation to this topic.

EVEN BEFORE Isaac and Rebekah actually met there was great enthusiasm amongst those involved in bringing them together. This is seen in Genesis 24, which emphasises the way the various parties were *running* in order to accomplish the eventual meeting. When the servant of Abraham saw Rebekah he "ran to meet her" (v. 17); Rebekah "ran again unto the well to draw water" (v. 20); she "ran, and told them of her mother's house these things" (v. 28); "Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well" (v. 29).

In addition to this, Rebekah showed that she was willing to go to meet Isaac. Abraham had previously instructed his servant: "And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath" (v. 8). But when Rebekah was asked whether or not she would go with the servant she said: "I will go" (v. 58).

And so Isaac and Rebekah married, a marriage accompanied by much running and by willing hearts. However, the enthusiasm and