In his endorsement of the Scholar’s Library, B. Wilkinson remarked that “if you have ever dreamed of a full-time research assistant, I have discovered one who has memorized every major reference book, mastered every Greek and Hebrew textual tool, knows every answer to any Biblical question, prepares background information in a spilt second … and always gives you more than you could have hoped for…. meet the new Logos Bible Software Series X.” Although this is a bit of an overstatement (Wilkinson should have perhaps said “many” instead of “every”), I tend to share Wilkinson’s enthusiasm, and not without reason.

The vision of Logos Bible Software, namely, to offer a comprehensive and integrated platform for biblical research for pastors, preachers, and scholars, is now being fully realized. Through very wise and informed planning and development, they now offer the user a wide-ranging, user-friendly, and effective product. In comparison to other similar products, I was unable to find any features in other software that Scholar’s does not also offer.

A definite plus for Logos Bible Software is that they offer much more than their competitors in the form of available books and other material. For instance, many publishers of hard-copy books now make their publications available through Libronix Digital Library System (Libronix DLS—Logos Research Systems is the parent company of Libronix that develops a technology called Libronix DLS). A good example is the
recently (2004) released Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible (ed. C. Hardmeier, E. Talstra, and A. Groves; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Haarlem: Nederlands Bijbelgenootskap). This software offers the ability to move beyond the word level by means of an appropriate model of linguistic description and meets the demand for categories scholars use in their analyses of texts. Even the material necessary for doing textual criticism is now available on screen through the click of a button. This makes highly specialized searches possible. (A standard book on textual criticism, A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament, is also available, although not included in Scholar’s.) In this review two major areas will receive attention: the material (books, sources, etc) offered and the program itself.

Let us first move to the material offered. I was presented with the Scholar’s Library Silver Edition, as well as with several of the other books available. (The latter provided insight into the full scope of what Logos Software offers. Obviously, all these books cannot be discussed in detail in this review, but they will be mentioned where necessary.) I recommend any interested person to go to the extensive website of Logos Bible Software (http://www.logos.com/) for more information on the books and other material on offer.

**Bibles** in the following languages are included in the Scholar’s Library: English (major translations, such as KJV, NKJV, NIV, ESV, ASV, NLT, RSV, NRSV); Greek (including UBS⁴ with morphology; Nestle-Aland with Gramcord as well as two interlinears; Septuaginta morphologically tagged; Analytical Greek New Testament; etc.); Hebrew (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia with morphology; the Fairhaven Hebrew-English Interlinear is available but not included in Scholar’s); Latin (Vulgate), Syriac (Old Syrian Gospels and Peshitta). The available sources are more than adequate. Although more Bibles could be added, too many Bibles might be confusing, especially if there is not some easy, accessible way of determining the nature of the different translations. Categorizing the translations in a general way might be of some help. I appreciate the difficulties involved, since the theory of translation is complex. Nevertheless, the introductory statements of each translation might be used as guideline, although these definitions may also differ.

**Lexicons** are important for any biblical research. An impressive list includes the following: (1) Hebrew: Brown-Driver-Briggs, Dictionary of Biblical Languages (Aramaic and Hebrew), Theological Workbook of the Old Testament, NAS Hebrew dictionary; and Gesenius; (2) Syriac: Analytical Lexicon of the Syriac New Testament; (3) Greek: Louw and Nida, intermediate Liddell and Scott (the unabridged version is also available but not included in Scholar’s), Kittel in both the abridged and unabridged forms, Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament; BDAG is also available but not included in the Scholar’s, which is a pity; a Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint is also included.
A strong point is the availability of Liddell and Scott as well as the unabridged Kittel. Despite criticism, Kittel is still a gold mine of information and an important research tool. A weak point is the fact that BDAG is not included in the Scholar’s package—it is indispensable for lexicographical research. It would be ideal to see this included in the next edition of Scholar’s.

For proper scholarly work grammars are important. A good selection of grammars is available for both Hebrew and Greek. They include for Hebrew: Gesenius (2nd ed., 1910), Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar (van der Merwe et al., 1996), Davidson’s Hebrew Syntax (3rd ed., 1902); Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Waltke and O’Connor, 1990; this book is available but not included in scholars); Hebrew Bible Insert (Putnam, 2nd ed., [1996] 2002). For Greek there are: Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek (Burton, 3rd ed., 1893); A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek (Nunn, 3rd ed., 1920); Greek New Testament Insert (Chapman-Shogren, 2nd ed., 1994). For both Hebrew and Greek the combination of older and more recent grammars provides a good balance. My experience with the program is that it suffices for basic work. I would, however, suggest that this area of the scholarly library receive some more attention. For instance, on the Greek language I would like to see some classical grammars such as Smyth and/or Goodwin. Blass-Debrunner is also a sine qua non. Although it is not included in Scholar’s, I learned that the grammar of Wallace is also available. That is good news. These remarks should not create the impression that what we have here is insufficient or of little use. By no means. However, there is room for improvement.

Listed under original language tools is the book Diagrammatical Analysis by Kantenwein (3rd ed., 1979), which helps with syntactical work. It seems to me that there is a lot of commitment and enthusiasm in expanding in the area of syntax. This is a positive direction for development.

This brings us to a crucial point, namely, **commentaries**. Obviously there are commentaries and commentaries. Providing substandard commentaries is dangerous, since it can be so misleading. Commentaries also differ widely in their application and nature. Responsible decisions are crucial. What do we have in the Scholar’s? Evidently the developers gave a lot of attention to this area of the library. There are several one-volume commentaries on the Bible, for instance, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (written by faculty members of Dallas Theological Seminary); *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Jamieson et al., 1871); *The Bible Expository Commentary* (Wiersbe, 1989), Matthew Henry’s commentary; the *New Bible Commentary* (4th ed., 1994), and *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Keener, 1993). Keil and Delitzsch’s ten volumes on the Old Testament and Lightfoot’s commentaries on Colossians, Philemon, Galatians, and Philippians are also included. Series include the New American Commentary (32 volumes) and the Daily Study Series (24 volumes). These are by no means standard commentaries, but they are helpful for preparing a sermon or when help is needed with a particular verse or section of the Bible. However, two good series of commentaries—the Word Biblical Commentary series as well as the ICC series—are also available (or will be available soon) but are not included in Scholar’s. I hope that this trend of including more and more quality commentary series will be sustained.

Several one-volume Bible **dictionaries** are included, such as the *New Bible Dictionary*, *Harper’s Dictionary*, *Easton’s Dictionary*, and *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*. *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* is also part of the collection. Again, this is adequate for basic work. The articles in, for instance, the *New Bible Dictionary* are of good and reliable quality. A point that must be mentioned is that the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* is also available but not included in Scholar’s. If this dictionary could be included in Scholar’s, it would be a winner. Dictionaries such as the *Oxford Bible Dictionary* or the *Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary* could also be considered.

The inclusion of *New Testament Milieu* (a very handy and good book on the sociocultural ecology of the New Testament) provides the user with reliable information on the historical, political, and social background of the Bible. Adding a few more standard works in this area would enhance the quality and usability of Scholar’s.

Additional texts such as ancient Egyptian texts, Josephus, Philo, and the Amarna letters are also standard to Scholar’s. The *Qumran Sectarian Manuscripts* and the *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* as well as the *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* are also available but not included in Scholar’s. I was thinking of the possibility of Logos making an agreement with TLG and Perseus to get all the Greek texts and their
translations and make them accessible through the Libronix search engine. That would be “heaven on earth” for researchers of the primary texts.

There are also some books on church history; for example, translations of the church fathers (37 volumes) come with Scholar's. These are not recent translations but are nevertheless very helpful. The Greeks texts will also be available shortly.

The rest of the material in the library is aimed at pastors. These include the Fresh Ideas Series, the Leadership Library Series, Library for Leadership Development, Library of Christian Leadership, Mastering Ministry Series, Pastor’s Soul Series, Pressure Point Series, Bible study training, sermons, quotations, small-group resources, home school and Christian education, Christian living, and useful devotions. This provides every pastor with a gold mine of resources, and with the Libronix search facility it takes but a second to find the material one needs.

Before we go to the features of the program itself, a suggestion seems in order. From a scholarly point of view, the library could still be improved in spite of the great value the library already has. Books on hermeneutics and exegetical methods, for instance, largely lack. Two books are indeed listed under the heading hermeneutics, but they are not sufficient. There are excellent books available on methods for reading ancient texts. I am thinking of books like that of Wilhelm Egger, Joel Green, Stanley Porter, Howard Fee, or even the older book of Howard Marshall on New Testament interpretation, to name but a few. There are also several books on hermeneutics, of which those of Thiselton (Two Horizons and New Horizons) would be a really valuable addition to this library. Then there are books on narratology by, for instance, Tolmie or Powell, books on sociology by Elliott, and so forth. A proper overview of the history of Old and New Testament research would also be of value. There are also significant theologies on both Old and New Testament. Even some of the older ones, such as that of von Rad, Bultmann, or Goppelt, are still influential and would enhance the quality of this library. It would be a positive step if Logos could pay some attention to these areas.

Obviously, this raises the question of price. I am sure Logos could include many more books (as is suggested above), but what would the effect be on the price? Will scholars and pastors be able to afford such an extensive library? The Logos team are apparently aware of this problem. They have very good offers for students (even less 50 percent), and the price is very competitive compared to the prices of other similar software packages offering much less than Scholar’s. In the end, the client should decide whether what she or he gets justifies what one pays, and this judgment should be based not only on the prices of the books alone but also on the added value of the search tools and other facilities offered by Scholar’s Library. The trend by Logos to offer specialized libraries is
also a wise move. This allows a person to make appropriate choices and buy a collection that best suits one’s purposes. As Logos makes more books available, building and offering more specialized libraries might become more viable.

The features of Libronix are impressive, to say the least. One cannot do justice to them in a review such as this. All the normal features that one expects from a professional program such as this—and can be found in competing software programs—are available. The following features deserve special mention.

The program has a “one click” facility. On the home page there are two possibilities for searching. The one is called “passage study” and the other “topic study.” One simply types a passage or a topic into the appropriate window and clicks “Go!” and then things start to happen. The “passage study” offers five different search options: passage guide, exegetical guide, word-study guide, Bible and commentary, and Bible only. If one, for instance, types John 10:1 into the window and choose exegetical guide, the different words of John 10:1 are displayed in a row. With each word one gets a list of dictionaries one can consult (with the click of a button) as well as access to grammatical notes (Greek New Testament Insert). Detailed word studies are thus possible. If one needs information from commentaries on the verse, simply use the “Bible and commentary” option. The “passage guide” opens up the available information—it lists the available commentaries, cross-references, parallel passages, and also topics (by clicking on these topics one is presented with all the information in one’s library on that particular topic). The program can be likened to a tree with multiple branches: more and more options are made available as one goes along. This myriad of options means that nothing is missed. One need not page through books looking for possible information; the search facility does all this effortlessly. Such thorough search facilities allow for optimal use of one’s library. Libronix indeed acquires and organizes the library resources in such a way as to ensure that information is always readily available.

A second feature deserving attention is the ease with which one can work with the Hebrew and Greek texts. By simply moving one’s cursor to a word, the grammatical information on that word appears in the left-hand corner. By right-clicking, a world of possibilities opens up. Apart from “copy” or “print selection” possibilities, one also has the option of adding notes to different words. Hence the frustration and inefficiency caused by reams of paper is now a thing of the past. One can gather and save one’s information on a verse or section for future reference by opening up a note file at a particular verse or section.

The “display information” button opens a window where the relevant word is morphologically explained, dictionary information is supplied, and grammatical
assistance is available. “Speed searches” in different forms, with different text bases, can also be made on that particular word. A list of dictionaries (which can be selected to suit one’s needs) is also provided and easily accessed. From this window one can even search all the references to that particular verse in one’s library. This is not all. One can request a “lemma report” for a particular word that provides a well-ordered list of all the occurrences of that particular word (ordered according to its different grammatical forms) in the opened document, plus the option of going to the dictionary of choice. From these lists one can immediately move to the Bible texts with the click of a button. It is difficult to imagine something easier or more comprehensive than this.

Detail features of the program are also impressive. For instance, little pop-up screens provide necessary help when needed. It would be wonderful if this pop-up feature were incorporated even more, for instance, when making more complex searches. Pages of books are also indicated in the left upper corner or in the text itself. Should one wish to quote something from one of these sources, it is simply a matter of cut and paste to the word processor. The bibliographical information (including date and page) of that particular quotation automatically appears in a footnote. So one can carry on mentioning one feature after the other that makes this program user-friendly and a pure joy to use.

Some interesting features include the following. A “sentence diagram” facility is available through which one can make a syntactical analysis of the Hebrew or Greek text. The “Bible clusters by word choice” provides a graphical presentation of the relative positions of different translations to each other. A list also shows—through the use of color—the differences between the chosen translation and the parallel translations. The “Bible version difference rivers” gives a graphical presentation of the relative differences between different translations. By choosing, for instance, a chapter, one can easily identify areas where the translations differ substantially. Such differences usually point to problem areas. Then there is the “verb river” that illustrates the changes in tense, person, and so forth in a chapter or section of a text. The “graphical queries” facility is still too difficult; here is a prime example of where pop-up screens with help information should be incorporated.

The system requirements are basic: the computer processor must be at least a 350MHz Pentium II with CD-ROM drive; the operating system needs to be Windows 98 or later; 64MB minimum memory is needed; and screen resolution must be 800x600 or larger.

With all these features Logos offers everything that their competitors offer, but with so much more. When one has a choice between seemingly similar programs, surely the program that offers so many added extras is an obvious choice. Logos’s philosophy of creating an extensive and high-quality library for scholars and pastors has already
resulted in roughly four thousand titles being electronically available. The energy and vision with which they have pursued this dream of a comprehensive and high-quality library indeed speaks volumes of their commitment to provide an excellent product. The numerous prepublication notes that I have received from Logos while working on this review have convinced me of their sustained commitment to the scholarly community. They are busy with several technical projects involving both the Hebrew and Greek Bible. These include good material on linguistics and even studies in Hebrew and Aramaic orthography. They are also creating a number of new morpho-syntactical databases. With technology, one invests in the future. The combination of efficient technology and the committed staff of the Logos team leave me with no doubt that the future of electronic biblical research is in good hands. As an aside, I also need to compliment Logos on their prompt and effective service on their help line.

At the end of a very enriching experience of getting to know Scholar’s Library I can only recommend it in the strongest possible way. It is user-friendly, saves time, has good quality material available, is reliable, and promises a lot for the future. I especially recommend lecturers to encourage their students to start out with Logos. The reason seems obvious: it will be of great help with Greek and Hebrew and with basic exegetical work. When students move into ministry, they would not need a new software package, since literally hundreds of books are available for practical ministry too. By adding what they need, they can have a good and constantly evolving library.