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From the New Secretary

Gratitude is the least of virtues.

Ingratitude the worst of vices.

Fourteen years ago Morris West succeeded Graham Hughes as our secretary and from 1958 to 1962 was also editor of *The Baptist Quarterly*. Patient readers of backfile copies of our journal will soon discover in the editorials and notices some measure of the secretary's work, but much is unrecorded. We do not know, and Dr. West will have no account, of the numbers of committee meetings he has arranged and attended, of the letters he has written, nor of the hours he has spent planning new work for the Society. Yet in these lie the major part of our indebtedness to him.

Since 1962 the Rev. Geoffrey Rusling has edited our journal. In 1963 our membership stood at 350. Today it is 450. Those figures need comment from no one. We heard with pleasure and relief that, though he moves from Spurgeon's College to Baptist Church House in September, he will take his editorial chair with him. Members will welcome an extra bonus — that he will set it down, metaphorically speaking, in the library to keep an eye on that most important room at Southampton Row !

The library of our Society was added to that of the Baptist Union in the early 1960s. (This affords one reason among many why officers of the Society will want to take a lively interest in the provision of library facilities in any new denominational headquarters). For six years, from 1964, the Rev. Ernest Clipsham was librarian. He was also our minute secretary, super-

vised the despatch of *The Baptist Quarterly* and answered a host of letters addressed to the Society at Baptist Church House. As is the way in these things, we only fully appreciated our debt to him when, last year, he told us he would be leaving for the pastorate at Cottingham Road, Hull. At least three people are now doing the work he once did.

For the past five years, the Rev. Thornton Elwyn has been our treasurer. His financial reports have been an encouragement to us all. Dare we hope that he will emulate his faithful predecessor, our vice-president, Mr. A. H. Calder, in length of service? Mr. Calder served us from 1934 to 1966.

Four years ago an issue of our journal was offered in honour of our president, Dr. Ernest Payne. Since then our debt to him has grown yet greater. Now we have honoured ourselves in calling Dr. West, Dr. B. R. White and Mr. C. B. Jewson to become vice-presidents along with Mr. Calder. Miss Rosemary Taylor becomes our new minute secretary. The committee, reinforced by the addition of Mr. J. H. Y. Briggs of Keele University, continues to serve the interests of our Society.

Not often shall we take so much space to express the gratitude we feel to those who serve, but it seemed fitting that I should take this opportunity at this time of change. Whatever is possible in the days ahead becomes so only because there was a yesterday when we were loyally served.

DOUGLAS C. SPARKES.

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