

Silas Eber Price

1860-1934





DR. SILAS EBER PRICE

The portrait of Dr. Price was painted in July, 1924, by Ralph Clarkson, the noted artist of Chicago. Funds for the painting were raised among the alumni by a committee composed of Sam Marsh, '14, chairman; Margaret Froning, '06; Nell Pattie, '12; George A. Collett, '13; and Harold Hanson, '16.

Silas Eber Price, third son of Thomas D. and Sarah J. Price, was born February 28, 1860, in the Welsh Hills, Licking County, Ohio, and died of a heart ailment October 27, 1934, at Pasadena, California, aged 74 years, seven months and twenty-seven days.

He attended the Welsh Hills District School, Granville Academy, and Denison University, graduating from the latter in 1885. He was licensed to preach by the Welsh Hills Baptist church and preached his first sermon from its pulpit fifty years ago last fall. He studied theology at the Baptist Union Theological Seminary at Morgan Park, Illinois, from 1884 to 1887, and was graduated from that institution in 1887. He was ordained to the Baptist ministry at LaCrosse, Wisconsin, in 1887 and held Baptist pastorates at LaCrosse, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Ottawa, Kansas. He was called to the presidency of Ottawa Uni-

versity in 1906 and served as executive head of that institution until 1924.

Denison University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1907. Ottawa University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1924.

He was married in 1887 to Miss Nettie May Sandon of Ontario, Wisconsin. To them were born two children, Clair S., now resident in London, England, where he is a correspondent for the New York Times; and Hattie May, for some time associate principal of the Baptist Mission School for Girls in Mandalay, Burma. His wife, two children, and two grand-children survive him.

Upon retiring from the presidency of Ottawa University, he and Mrs. Price took a two-year trip around the world. Enroute they visited their son in England and their daughter in Burma. They also visited many mission stations in the countries through which they passed. Returning to the United States in 1926, they retired to Pasadena, California.

During the nineteen years of his service in the pastorate and eighteen years as a college president, Dr. Price found time to render many other kinds of denominational service. He was successively a member of the Baptist State Convention Board of Minnesota, of Wisconsin, and of Kansas, also a member for many years of the Board of Education and of the Board of Home Missions of the Northern Baptist convention. During his years in Pasadena he occupied the positions of chairman of the board of deacons of the First Baptist church of that city, chairman of the building committee of the \$250,000 church school building, teacher of an adult Bible class, and chairman of the Committee on Religious Education.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN OTTAWA UNIVERSITY

"I hope to serve five years, at least, in order that a constructive movement along all lines may have a chance for success." So said Dr. Price as he began his work as president of Ottawa University on July 1, 1906. Little did he realize that he would occupy the position eighteen long, strenuous years and attain many of his ideals for the University.

Dr. Price came to the school from the pastorate of the First Baptist church in Ottawa. Born of good Welsh parentage, he was well fitted by inheritance and training for Christian leadership. He was a man of sound judgment and of excellent organizing ability, with a Christian zeal for service.

President Price's first annual report to the trustees is interesting in that it shows the physical properties of the University at that time. The endowment amounted to \$151,244.53. There was a deficit of \$6,082.34 accumulated over a three-year period. The faculty numbered ten. 129 students were enrolled in the college, 90 in the academy, and 145 in the business department. The University had three buildings; two instructional, the almost new administration building and the old Taub Jones hall; and one dormitory, Charlton Cottage.

The new president was not a spectacular leader, but by the steady methods of careful selection and painstaking effort he set about to increase the material resources of the institution, to strengthen its faculty, to increase the student attendance, and to standardize the scholastic work. Accordingly, in the third year of his administration an endowment campaign was launched

with a strong field secretary in charge. In October, 1910, a report of this campaign indicated that \$100,055.47 in subscriptions had been added to the resources of the school.

The finances of the school were ever on his mind. He realized that the University must have a steady income of gifts to be a worthwhile institution. Toward the goals of a sufficient endowment, adequate buildings, and a complete faculty he constantly drove forward. He left no phase of the college undeveloped.

In the eighteen years of his leadership he built the endowment up to \$558,913.74, by June 1, 1925. That meant a constant effort on the part of Dr. Price to secure funds. At times it was difficult and soul-trying, but with his tremendous energy he irresistibly pressed on toward a greater endowment for his University.

Nor did the beloved leader build up an endowment for the sake of endowment alone. He knew what needed to be done. The first step was to build up the faculty. During his administration there were many faculty additions, especially in the departments of economics, English, sociology, education, science and Bible.

The appointment of the first dean of arts and sciences was recommended by President Price in 1913. This addition to the faculty not only afforded greater scholastic efficiency, but also gave the President more time for promoting the financial interests of the University.

The enlistment of a large student body was a goal toward which Dr. Price was constantly striving. In 1916 the enrollment was 296. Then came the interruption of the great war and the consequent slump in enrollment. It was a dark time in Doctor Price's administration. In

his annual report made near the end of the war he stated, "This has been the hardest year of my life." Uneasiness was noted among all the students then engaged in study, and it was difficult for them to do good scholastic work. The student body after the war continued to increase, and by the time Dr. Price retired the enrollment was 402.

It is often said that if the visitor to the Ottawa University campus wishes to see a monument to Dr. Price, it is only necessary to look at the splendid buildings that were erected during his leadership. Although the buildings were not the only fine things Dr. Price secured for the University, without doubt they are the physical embodiment of his splendid service.

The present gymnasium, or Student Building, as it is officially named, was the first building to be completed during his administration. It was started in 1914. The student body contributed heavily to the building. At the time of its completion in 1915, it was one of the finest physical education plants in the state. Besides the big basketball court and gymnasium proper it contained a swimming pool, a handball court, an indoor track, dressing rooms, and offices. It was truly an excellent building and one of which Ottawa University was justly proud.

The erection of Ward Science hall was the next building step. Its cornerstone, bearing the inscription "Pro scientia et religione" was laid in 1920. The completion of the building gave Ottawa University one of the finest laboratory buildings in the middle west. It is a building of three stories, the first floor being used for the physics and the mathematics departments, the second for the biology department, and the third for the chemistry department. The building, splendidly and beautifully equipped, was a source of joy to Dr. Price, to the University, and to the town.

The central heating plant was the next unit erected under Dr. Price's supervision. This was to provide not only for the buildings already on the campus, but also for the buildings of the future.

The Cook athletic field was also constructed during the later years of Dr. Price's administration. This gave the students a fine field on which to conduct their outdoor athletic contests.

There were other physical additions during his career: the valuable Crevecoeur collection of insects, the Kilbuck Entomological collection, and additions to the library.

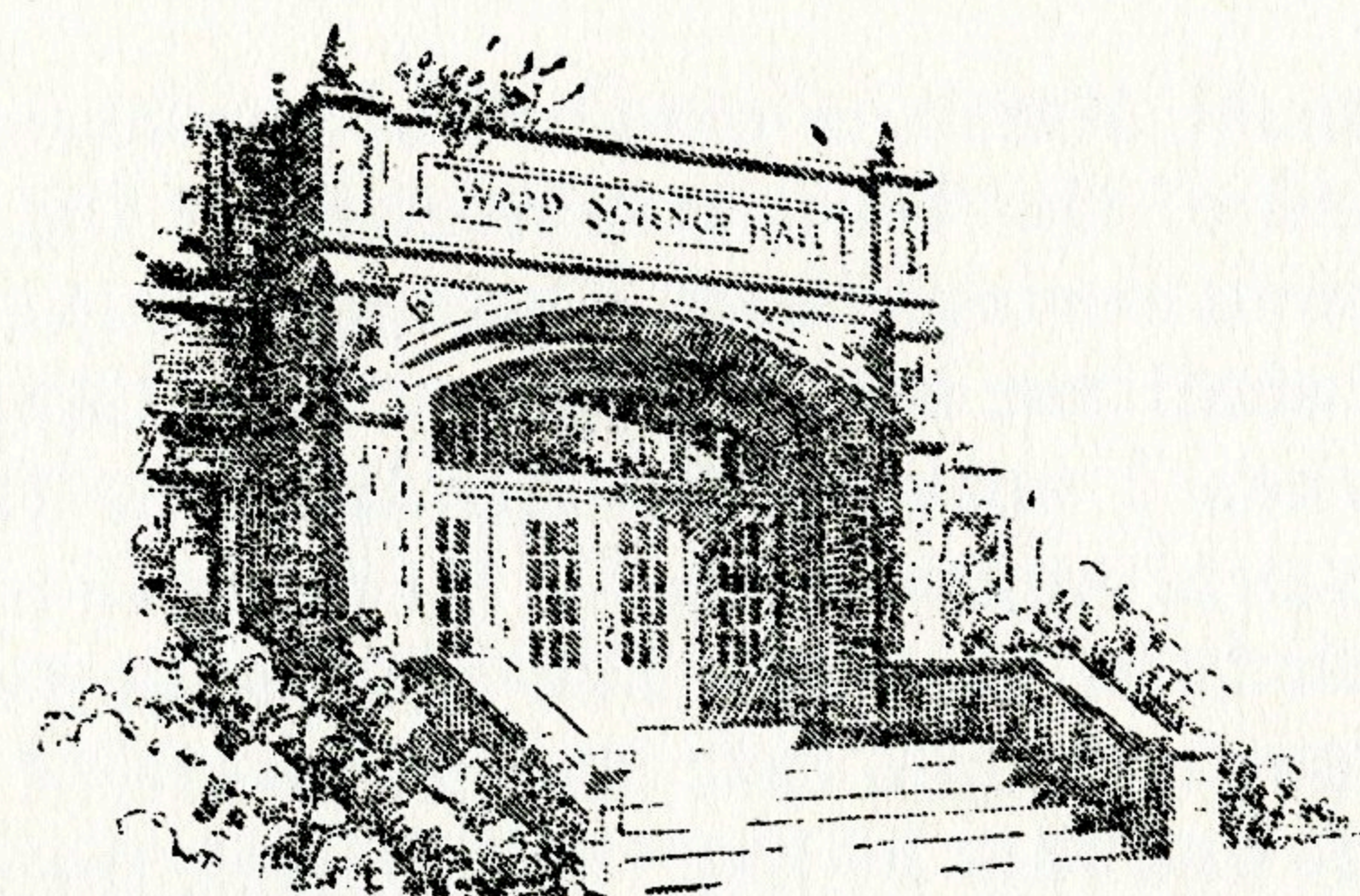
During most of his early years at the University, Dr. Price, in addition to his administrative duties, carried a heavy teaching load giving instruction in Bible and religious education. In 1921 he recommended to the board that it create a full professorship for the department. This was done and in February, 1922, Dr. W. P. Behan came to the school as professor of Bible and religious education. This considerably lightened the load which was becoming quite burdensome to Dr. Price.

The last major financial campaign which the honored President undertook resulted in gifts and pledges to the amount of \$550,000. This last great effort was a severe strain on his health. In the midst of the 1923-1924 session, under the urgent advice of physician and friends, he resigned. The board later honored him by making him President Emeritus.

During all the eighteen years while the mantle of leadership graced his shoulders there was never a day but that the needs of Ottawa University were on his sympathetic mind. He began his administration with the fond hope of building Ottawa University into a great institution financially well established. While, of course, the

school never reached the zenith which he had hoped that it might, it made remarkable progress. He started his work with few students, few buildings, few teachers, and small endowment. He ended with almost three times as many students, three additional buildings, twice as many teachers, and almost four times as much endowment.

All alumni, former students, and friends the world over will ever rejoice and give thanks that God raised up such a man as Dr. Price to lead Ottawa University through eighteen memorable years.



LASTING TRIBUTE TO ENDURING ACHIEVEMENT

A college president is viewed and evaluated by four groups — students, faculty members, trustees, and the constituency which he serves; a glorious record is made by a president who can win the respect and love of all four groups. Such a record was made by Dr. Silas Eber Price, the president of Ottawa University 1906-1924.

Students who attended Ottawa University during this period found in their president, Dr. Price, a constant source of strength and inspiration. With the passing of their great friend, they have written with appreciation of the kindly spirit that guided them in college days.

Mr. Samuel Marsh, a member of the class of 1914, and now head of the Trust Department of the First National Trust and Savings Bank, Chicago, Illinois, pays this tribute: "I shall not soon forget my first impression of Dr. Price when I entered the Academy in 1907. His splendid physical appearance, his large clear and kindly eyes, the melody of his voice, and his thoughtful, serious attitude suggested to me that he was aware of his great mission in life and that he had the intellect, the sympathy of heart, and the physical capability to do his work as it should be done. My six years of association with him verified those first impressions. Whenever I took to him a problem concerning my student life, he always dealt with me in a kind, considerate and helpful manner, and his decisions in my behalf were always well considered and sound."

A member of the class of 1909, the Rev. Robert Wynne, now pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hays,

Kansas, states that Dr. Price ranks with the first half dozen men who have inspired him most. And Mr. Marion Hume, a graduate of the next class, district manager of a nationally prominent life insurance company, Ottawa, Kansas, states that the student was always welcomed by Dr. Price. "He was never too busy to listen to individual perplexities and problems, and his advice and encouragement were always given with such genuine personal understanding that one left him with renewed faith and ambition."

Dr. Chester Roberts, '13, head of the department of chemistry at Colgate University, Hamilton, N. Y., has written of Dr. Price as the students' friend. "The memory of President Silas Eber Price as a friend will remain a vivid one to the students of my college generation. Chapel was not a bore when he led. We all took and enjoyed his senior ethics course."

In like manner Dr. Ray Brewster, '14, professor of chemistry at the University of Kansas writes: "As president of Ottawa University Dr. Price exercised a thoughtful consideration for each student and maintained that friendly interest until his death."

Of the religious inspiration gained from Dr. Price, the Rev. Frank Jennings, '12, pastor, Church of the Master, Cleveland, Ohio, writes: "Deeply religious, he believed that religion could be made intellectually respectable. Believing in the work of forces upon life beyond our understanding, he wanted knowledge of those forces so far as it is attainable and had an intense desire for honesty in dealing with available facts. I well remember one of his chapel talks on 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' That, I think, is indicative of one of the deepest guiding principles of his life, and many a student confused with the truth being so swiftly put forward in those days looks back on Dr.

Price's attitude and teaching with humble and profound gratitude."

Miss Lettie Archer, '18, herself a missionary to China, speaks for many representatives of Ottawa University on foreign fields. "Comparatively few people in passing on leave a very evident influence, but the spirit of our beloved Dr. Price lives on in many lives in all parts of the world to inspire to nobler and higher service."

The fact that administrative officers and faculty members of Ottawa University had most profound respect for their leader and shared with the students real affection for him is an equally great tribute to the genuine worth and ability of Dr. Price.

Dr. Charles O. Hardy, the Brookings Institution of Economics, Washington, D. C., who for eight years was a member of the faculty and who served as dean of the college for two years, writes thus in praise of Dr. Price: "The phase of Dr. Price's personality which stands out most clearly in my memory is the contrast between the impression he made on those who met him casually or knew him only through his public appearance and on those who came into personal contact with him in his daily work. There is perhaps no better test of character than the degree of loyalty which a man is able to inspire in those who have to take orders from him, and by this test Dr. Price rang true as few men do. He was not particularly popular with the rank and file of students or of the community. His dignified and somewhat cold exterior easily gave the impression of a lack of sympathy with those whose interests were different from his own. But his absolute honesty, his fine sense of value, and his devotion to the best interests of the school, the commun-

ity, the church, and the nation, inspired in those who really knew him an admiration that deepened as the years went by. The fineness of his judgment as to where duty lay was equalled only by his loyalty to the duty that he saw. Students who met him in his role of disciplinarian had no notion of the pain it cost him to settle on his course of action when duty required that he give pain to others. To him could truly be applied the motto of his Alma Mater: She could not love her sons so dear, loved she not truth and honor more."

Another who served as dean of the college, 1912-1915, and who has expressed like appreciation of Dr. Price's leadership is Dr. Rolvix Harlan, head of the department of sociology and social ethics at the University of Richmond, Virginia. "My years at Ottawa are among the happiest of my life and my memory often goes back to the kindly gentleman and scholar under whom my educational career as professor was begun. He was patient, but insistent in keeping the highest ethical note in all the relations within the institution and with the constituency which it was serving. He was a force in making the Christian way of life a reality in education—a great leader."

Dr. L. R. Higgins, for eleven years a member of Dr. Price's faculty, writes, "Dr. Price was a most likable and dependable man. His steadiness, solidity, and kindness created in his associates confidence and loyalty. No one questioned his motives and character. All in all, he was a genuine and noble man, a true friend, a loved and honored leader. It is hard to conceive how Ottawa University could have found a better president than President Price."

In the October 30, 1934, issue of the Kansas City Star appeared a tribute written by Charles V. Stansell, associate editor, formerly head of the English department at O. U. "A genuine contribution to the progress of higher education in Kansas was made by Dr. Silas Eber Price in his eighteen year term as president of Ottawa University. Dr. Price was a scholar of recognized attainments and a member of a family of scholars and educators. He gave to the institution he long served an unquestioned standing among the institutions both of Kansas and the central West. While the head of a denominational college and while possessing the background of extended ministerial training and service, Dr. Price had the mental acumen and the tactful facility required to relate the findings of modern research and of science to the essential teachings of religion as they appealed, or should appeal, to the intelligent youth of today. He was a man of the profoundest sincerity who commanded the abiding confidence of his fellow workers and of thousands of young men and women of Kansas and nearby states."

On the present faculty of O. U. are four members who shared many problems with Dr. Price and observed his devotion to duty. Dr. Warren P. Behan, acting-president of Ottawa University, in remarks made at the funeral service in the Welsh Hills Baptist Church, Ohio, on Friday, November 9, paid this tribute to Dr. Price: "The passing of Dr. Silas Eber Price, president of Ottawa University for eighteen years and president emeritus for ten years, has closed the earthly career of a man who was a prince among men, a Christian gentleman, a valued counselor and friend, a loved pastor, and an inspiring teacher, a successful administrator in college education, and above all a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Perhaps no man through the life of the college has left upon

the student life and the policies of the institution a deeper impression or given it a finer loyalty, or desired for it more earnestly a Christian outlook and influence."

Dr. W. B. Wilson, head of the department of biology and co-worker with Dr. Price for eighteen years, pays tribute to Dr. Price as a builder. "Dr. Price impressed me continually with his fine example of devoted labor. He was a builder in every constructive way at his command. Buildings rose up to grace our campus, not by magic, but by dint of careful planning and the sacrificial giving of friends he interested in the school. But Dr. Price was even more interested in the character building of students."

Prof. R. H. Ritchie, head of the department of English, has submitted this tribute: "'By what good qualities of character do you remember Silas Eber Price?' To this question thirty years acquaintance, including eighteen years of partnership in educational and religious work, supply the material for the answer. During those thirty years I found him to be cautiously progressive, careful in his plans but willing to invest in the future and to rely on that future to justify the investment."

Another member of the English department, and head of the Academy for many years, Miss Lulu Brown, makes this statement: "Dr. Price was an administrator and leader who won the respect and confidence of those with whom he worked; yet his official character and relationship were so dominated by personal sympathy and understanding that he also won the love of both students and faculty members, who found in him a wise counselor, a true friend, and an earnest Christian gentleman. His helpful influence will be with them always, and they will think of him with affection and gratitude."

Dr. Price, throughout his eighteen years of service for O. U. received the whole-hearted cooperation of O. U. trustees, who honored him for his loyalty to the Christian ideals of his college and for his willingness to further the best interests of the college, no matter how great the cost in effort, in anxiety, and even in health. One of these trustees, Dr. Price's pastor, the Rev. W. A. Elliott, writes: "Dr. Price was an executive of the first order. He was a teacher that inspired and made effective his teaching. He was a master builder. The visible monuments of Silas Eber Price are to be seen on the campus in the splendid buildings which were constructed under his administration."

Mr. A. E. Willis, who is now chairman of the executive committee and whose father was for many years a most helpful member of the board, honors Dr. Price in these words. "Dr. Price was a Christian gentleman who was true to his convictions. He had a wonderful capacity for hard work, which he did not hesitate to exercise effectively. I deem it a great privilege to have known him and to have been able to call him my friend."

That the influence of Dr. Price extended far beyond Ottawa and the confines of our Baptist college to the interests of the denomination throughout the state is established by a statement to be found in the November, 1934, issue of Kansas Baptist, Dr. J. T. Crawford, '92, editor. "The life and works of no man is likely to be longer remembered or more loyally cherished by Kansas Baptists than that of Dr. S. E. Price." Nor did this influence stop with denominational interests of Kansas; it was much more significant. Dr. Frank W. Padelford, secretary of the Baptist Board of Education in New York City writes of Dr. Price's connection with these larger influences: "Of his leadership at Ottawa I need not write. Let me

write of his connection with the Baptist Board of Education. He believed that the Baptists ought to work together for the development of their program of Christian education. He was a member of the little group of men who twenty-two years ago began the planning for this Board. He became one of the original members of this Board and retained his membership until his removal to California. "We always regarded Dr. Price as one of the most valued members of the Board. He always contributed wisdom and experience to our discussions. He believed that religion is an essential element in all true education, and gave himself unreservedly to its promotion. Dr. Price always thought a second time before he spoke or acted. That was why his associates always listened to him. That was why he made few mistakes and why his successors have had to correct few errors. His words were always the words of wisdom."

Tributes such as these endeavor to express the appreciation of co-workers and friends for one who gave his life unstintingly for Christian education in college, in church, and in community.



MEMORIAL SERVICES

Funeral services were held for Dr. Price at Pasadena, October 30, 1934. Dr. Daniel F. Rittenhouse, pastor of Dr. Price's church and Prof. Robert Lynn, of Redlands University, a graduate in the 1920 Ottawa University class, conducted the services. The last rites were held in the Welsh Hills Baptist church in Ohio near the old family home November 9. The service there was in charge of the interim pastor of the church, Dr. F. C. Detwiler of Denison University, Granville, Ohio, assisted by Dr. W. P. Behan, acting-president of Ottawa University.

At his own request Dr. Price's body was laid to rest in the beautiful Welsh Hills cemetery, near Granville, Ohio.

"This be the verse that you grave for me
'Here he lies where he longed to be,
Home is the sailor, home from the sea
And the hunter home from the hill'."

A memorial service was also held at the First Baptist church of Ottawa, November 11, with Dr. W. A. Elliott, pastor; Dr. W. P. Behan, and Prof. Theodore Palmquist, of the class of 1925, participating.

Only his earthly career is finished. He, himself, has moved on into the larger realm of the Father, where new activities and new duties will engage his eager spirit, already at work under the thrilling "power of the endless life." God's power and service are timeless.