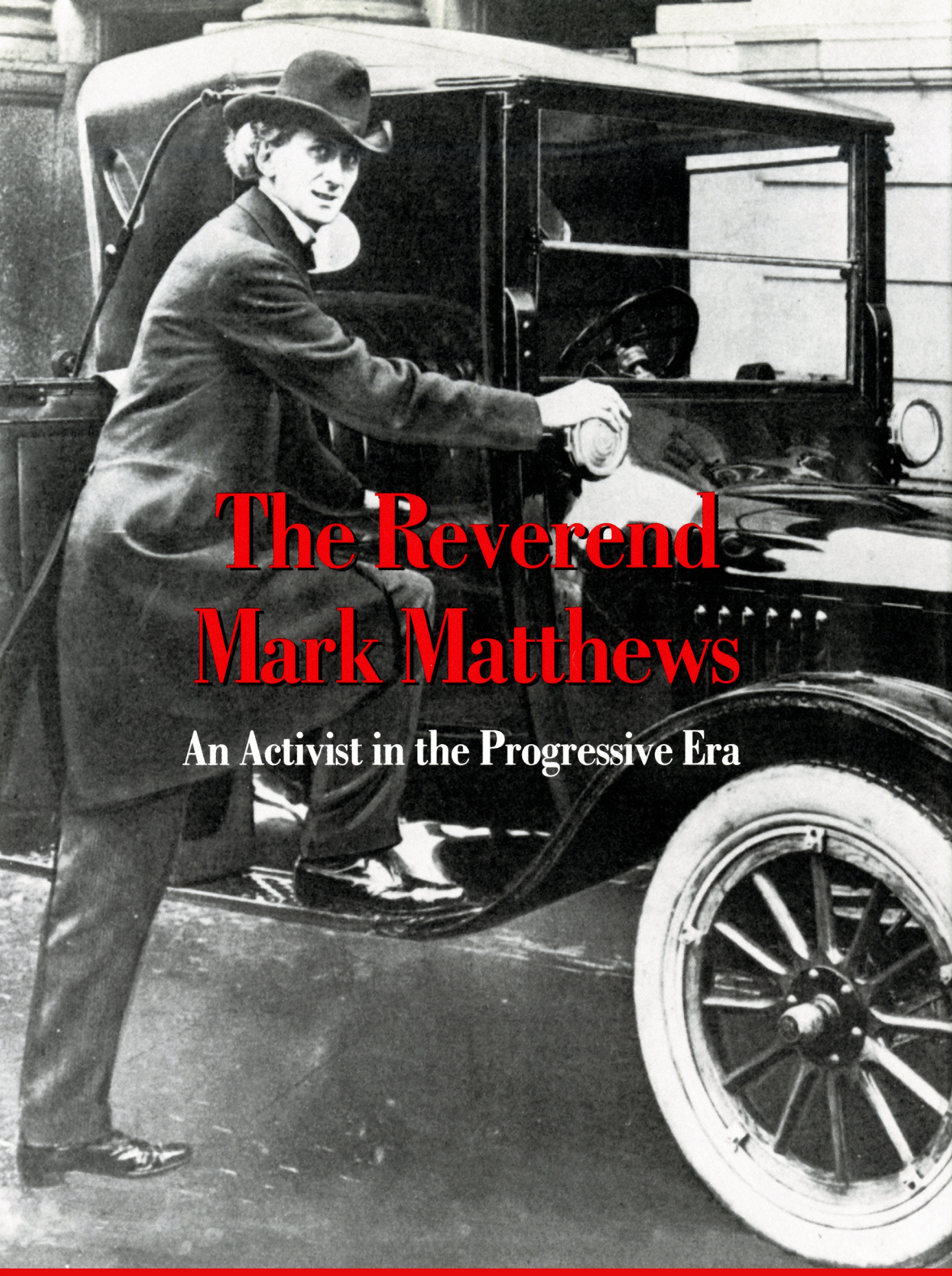

The Reverend Mark Matthews

An Activist in the Progressive Era

DALE E. SODEN

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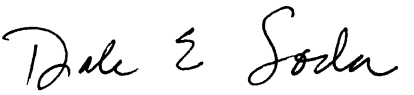

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For my parents and in memory of my grandmother,
who first told me stories of Mark Matthews

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Preface

On February 8, 1940, Seattle residents by the thousands and people from around the country paid their last respects to the pastor of the largest Presbyterian church in the world, Mark Allison Matthews. Three days earlier, the seventy-two-year-old pastor had died from pneumonia complications; with his death, a remarkable era in the history of Seattle ended. On the day of Matthews's funeral, hundreds of men and women stood outside First Presbyterian Church in a chilly wind and winter rain for hours in order to acknowledge silently the life of this man who had exerted so much religious influence in the Pacific Northwest. An estimated 5,000 people passed by his casket; many barely knew him, while others had worked intimately with him during his thirty-eight years in Seattle. The funeral service itself reflected the broad reach of this Southerner who came to the Pacific Northwest shortly after the Klondike gold rush at the turn of the century and soon went to work with mayors, governors, and presidents to realize his vision of a righteous urban community. Washington Governor Clarence Martin and Seattle Mayor Arthur Langlie joined members of the church session at the head of the procession, and elders of First Presbyterian served as honorary pallbearers. The Reverend Frank Warren, chair of the religion department at Seattle Pacific College, gave the opening prayer, and the Very Reverend John D. McLauchlan, dean of St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, closed the service. Seattle newspapers published tributes from around the state and across the nation that praised Mark Matthews's impact on the many people whose lives he had touched. But there surely were others in the city who did not mourn the cleric's passing. His life had been filled with controversy and criticism of his method and manner. Yet without doubt, he left an imprint on the city and the region that has not been fully analyzed or understood.

No other clergyman wielded greater influence either socially or politically in the Pacific Northwest during the first half of the twentieth century. Matthews built the First Presbyterian Church of Seattle into a remarkably complex organization. A few Seattle residents can still recall the rabid prohibitionist's attacks on police corruption and his charges of political graft and his public feuds with Colonel Alden Blethen, publisher of the *Seattle Times*, and Mayor Hiram Gill. The preacher was an imposing figure at six feet, five inches tall; he wore his hair longer than was the custom in Seattle and could exert a commanding presence in almost any gathering. He could be charming in the tradition of a Southern gentleman, but he also could be vicious in his attacks upon his enemies.

Matthews's ministerial career was remarkable. From the beginning of his pastorate in Georgia to the end of his life in Seattle, Matthews immersed himself in the political issues of his day. Attracted to a number of the reform issues associated with Populism and Progressivism, Matthews embraced many tenets of the Social Gospel movement, which attempted to address the ills associated with urbanization and industrialization. Famous for its fight against tuberculosis and its innovative kindergarten, Matthews's church in Seattle also organized day nurseries to assist working mothers and unemployment bureaus for the downtrodden. Matthews helped establish the first juvenile court in Seattle, and his work with Japanese and Chinese immigrants—at a time when Asian prejudice ran high on the Pacific Coast—was a significant contribution. Late in his career he led the drive to build Harborview hospital and served on countless social service boards. As the head of a congregation that numbered nearly 9,000 at its peak, Matthews exercised considerable political influence over numerous mayors, and many Seattleites benefited from his friendship with President Woodrow Wilson. In many ways, his approach could be considered progressive and innovative. At the same time, Matthews harbored an anxiety about the state of American society that manifested itself in fundamentalist religious views and extremely conservative political positions. He became a central figure in the battle between fundamentalism and modernism within the Presbyterian church.

Yet little has been written and virtually no analysis offered about this cleric who was born in the hills of Georgia. Several historians of the Pacific Northwest have mentioned him briefly in the context of certain events. Perhaps most notably, Murray Morgan, in his book *Skid*

Road (1951), described Matthews as someone who could have stepped out of a seventeenth-century Puritan New England village. In general, Matthews has attracted the attention of historians for the way in which he seemingly ran against the tide of historical change. From his diatribes against alcohol to his opposition to women in the pulpit, Matthews has appeared to many to be the symbol of a male-dominated religious world that increasingly found itself out of place in a modern society. Often thought of as conservative or reactionary by historians or local commentators, Matthews perhaps has seemed uninteresting as a window into the world in which he lived. However, Mark Matthews is an excellent lens through which to view American society from the Civil War to the beginning of the Second World War. Although at times he did indeed attempt to live in opposition to a number of historical forces, far more of his life is a product of the broader intellectual, religious, social, and political currents of his day.

Yet if Matthews's life is best understood as a result of many of the forces of his day, it is nevertheless a complex prism through which to view his times. He was no simple-minded preacher or one-dimensional thinker. He blended social reform with conservative theology in a way that distinguished him from the majority of his colleagues. His Southern religion, peculiar intellectual training, and early political experiences created a potent and complex combination of ideas and values for a minister coming to the Pacific Northwest—the least-churched region of the country. Matthews attempted to make Christianity relevant and compelling to the modern person without falling prey to the temptation to abandon orthodox evangelical Christianity. At his most confident, he believed that the Bible could provide a solution for every problem facing American society; his sermons reflect a remarkable breadth of topic and concern. He never wavered in his conviction that Christianity provided the one true path for all who cared to believe. At his most anxious, however, Matthews felt that Christianity as well as traditional American values were vulnerable to conspiracy, heresy, and an emerging secular and hedonistic popular culture.

The complexity of that tension between his vision of a more socially just and humane society and his fears and anxieties that resulted in bitter conflict with those with whom he differed provides a major theme of this book. In the end, Matthews is best understood as largely the product of his time and place rather than as a person who lived simply in opposition to his era. And yet there are surprising moments of unpredictability in Matthews's life that make any effort to explain

confidently the reasons behind all of his actions a difficult challenge.

To attempt to understand the vision and direction of Mark Matthews's ministry, one must start with his religious and political experiences in the South. Born two years after the Civil War in a small town north of Atlanta, Matthews grew up in the milieu of Southern evangelicalism. Trained in Old School Presbyterian theology, which tended to reinforce intellectual rigidity and helped lead him toward fundamentalism, he grew up in a part of Georgia that experienced the unrest of the farmers' movements and nascent Populism. From an early age he witnessed religion and politics being intertwined in such a way that he found them inseparable for the rest of his life. His basic set of intellectual assumptions, his fundamental political worldview, and his foundational religious outlook originated during his years in the South. This combination of influences led him to the basic conclusion that his primary duty as a minister was to help create righteous communities whether they were in Calhoun, Georgia, Jackson, Tennessee, or Seattle, Washington.

Like thousands of religious leaders of his day, Matthews expressed confidence that America would be the New Israel and that urban communities would play a vital role in the spread of Christianity. He embraced political reform in order to create a more socially just society and to cleanse the community of evil forces. Matthews believed, like a good Calvinist, that he should transform the communities in which he lived according to Biblical principles. Like thousands of Protestant ministers, Matthews believed that the sick and needy should receive adequate care; he believed that cities should exemplify the best of democratic traditions; and he believed that the future depended on Americans embracing appropriate moral values. Women, children, and the common laborer should all be protected from the exploitative nature of free-market capitalism. At the heart of his dream was a belief that people must share a common commitment to the well-being of the community. He assumed that homogeneity was superior to heterogeneity, and moral absolutism superior to cultural relativism. But if those assumptions help explain his zeal for reform, they also help explain his religious fundamentalism and tendency to repress his political enemies. His commitment to a common set of truths and values led him to attack vigorously political, intellectual, and religious ideas that seemed to threaten that unity. For Matthews, producing a righteous community required both reform and vigilance; it required both persuasion

and coercion. His urge to shape the social ethos of the city and his determination to dominate Seattle's religious life earned him both admiration and enmity.

Organized in a roughly chronological fashion, this book identifies the principal religious, intellectual, and political forces that shaped his early ministries in Georgia and Tennessee. Significant attention is paid to the way in which Matthews embarked on a ministry that reflected the influence of social Christianity in the late nineteenth century. Once in Seattle, Matthews rapidly increased membership in the First Presbyterian Church and attempted to impart a complex worldview to his parishioners. From attitudes toward gender, the home, and the workplace to issues of cultural authority and the role of the church in the larger society, Matthews attempted to shape the nature of his congregation's understanding. Chapters four and five explore the ways in which his quest for urban righteousness led him to embrace the strategies of the Social Gospel and most of the reforms associated with the Progressive movement. Chapters six and seven analyze his well-publicized battles with Mayor Hiram Gill and the publisher of the *Seattle Times*, Alden Blethen. Chapter eight details Matthews's response to the First World War and the impact of nationalism on his political values. An overwhelming fear of communism and radical politics influenced his views of the Seattle General Strike and the activities of the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies). Matthews's drive for righteousness made him particularly vulnerable to the patriotic tenor of the times. The Red Scare exacerbated his natural intolerance of religious and political differences. And yet, far from being out of step with his times, Matthews reflected the general views of the majority of Seattle residents during this period.

Chapter nine explores Mark Matthews's role within the national Presbyterian church. Elected moderator of the General Assembly, the largest governing body of the church, in 1912, Matthews emerged as a major figure at precisely the point at which Presbyterians began to split over fundamentalism and modernism. By the 1920s, he could be identified with the extreme conservatives, and yet he came to play a critical role on the Special Commission of 1925, which helped to avoid a major schism within the church. He also wielded influence in the debate within the national Presbyterian church over the role that women should play. His career and his sermons provide evidence of the complexity of the fundamentalist movement.

The final two chapters analyze Matthews in the context of the 1920s and '30s. Like many Americans, he experienced considerable anxiety over everything from the "amusement mania" of the period, as he liked to call it, to the changing nature of Seattle politics. Through his radio station and other means, he continued to attempt to influence the ways in which people experienced the modern world. During the last decade of his life, Matthews remained engaged by the events of his day. He tried desperately to mitigate the effect of the Great Depression on hundreds of people, he warned his parishioners and anyone who would listen about the dangers of communism, and perhaps most notably, he spoke out vigorously against the rising tide of Nazism and Jewish persecution.

Mark Matthews was a man of enormous energy and vision. He was clearly shaped by the times in which he lived, and yet he struggled mightily to gain control over the forces at work within American life. He attempted to move thousands of people to believe in a transcendent God and hoped that a righteous society would be the result. He was not universally liked in his own time, and certainly some of his activities appear to be the result of poor choices, his own quest for personal power, or bad judgment. Yet Matthews touched a tremendous number of lives and proved unusually influential not only in the Pacific Northwest but throughout the country. His dream of a righteous urban community seems naïve to most Americans in the late twentieth century, but Mark Matthews's vision empowered him to become the Pacific Northwest's most prominent religious figure of the twentieth century. This is the story of how he was shaped by the times in which he lived, drew upon every resource at his command, and attempted to redeem the world around him.

The Reverend Mark Matthews

An Activist in the Progressive Era

CHAPTER 1

The Hills of Georgia

You say you love God and your fellow man who is your brother. Now prove that love by entering the field and working for the salvation and elevation of your city and country at large.

—Mark Matthews (1893)

Mark Matthews loved the Pacific Northwest with a great passion. Few people voiced their support for the region more frequently than did he. Boosterism permeated his soul; he never turned down an opportunity to praise Seattle's climate, economic resources, and hospitality. Yet throughout his life, the preacher retained a deep affection for the region of his birth—the South. Because Matthews spent his first thirty-four years in Georgia and Tennessee, his approach to problems, his patterns of work and thought, as well as his vision for a righteous society were nurtured in the South. Born only two years after the end of the Civil War, he grew to maturity in Georgia during Reconstruction. He, like many fellow Southerners in those years, faced the problem of survival. The experience of poverty seared Matthews's childhood memory in a way that helped develop his compassion for the downtrodden. But in addition to his experience with poverty, Matthews grew to maturity in a region steeped in the religious values of Southern revivalism and evangelical Presbyterianism. This Southern religious background would greatly shape his attitudes toward church growth and congregational mission.

Matthews's formal education also took place in the South. Limited to a great extent by the economic and social upheaval after the Civil War, his schooling nevertheless provided him with an intellectual

framework grounded in Southern Presbyterian theology. It was this brand of Presbyterianism and this specific intellectual orientation that he took with him to the Pacific Northwest.

Matthews could not help being influenced too by the political climate of his native region. Growing up in the hills of northern Georgia, he experienced the frustrations and hardships that encouraged farmers to attempt political change. The Farmers' Alliance movement and subsequently the Populist movement helped shape his political views and pushed him toward reform efforts. These movements clearly helped him develop the perception that politics provided the key to shaping the social ethos of a community. Matthews became convinced that religion and politics could be effectively intertwined. Throughout his life, he responded to forces for change in American society and specifically within the Presbyterian church. But his basic assumptions and his commitment to taking an active part in shaping the affairs of his community and country were established in the tiny communities of Calhoun and Dalton, Georgia, at the southern tip of the Appalachian Mountains.

Few details about Matthews's childhood have survived. His father, Mark Lafayette Matthews, was born near Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1826; his paternal grandfather, Frank C. Matthews, was a prominent planter. For some reason, most probably financial, Mark Lafayette migrated to Macon, Georgia, where he established himself as a carriage maker in approximately 1840.[1] Tall, handsome, and ambitious, Mark Lafayette aspired to respectability in Southern circles. Later in life he sported a distinguished white beard, and his granddaughter remembered him as an inveterate chewer of tobacco. In Macon, Mark Lafayette met Melinda Rebecca Clemmons, the daughter of a hat manufacturer. Clemmons, a Methodist, had been born in Dandridge, Tennessee, in 1837. In 1850, Mark Lafayette and Melinda Rebecca married and, shortly thereafter, moved to Calhoun, a small community of fewer than 1,000 people on the railroad line between Chattanooga and Atlanta. Surrounded by hills and pine forests, Calhoun served as a small commercial and business hub for area farmers. Mark and Melinda Matthews became respected members of the community and apparently rose to relative prosperity, as indicated by their ownership of two slaves. However, the family suffered a number of tragedies. Melinda Matthews was pregnant as many as ten times between 1850 and 1867, but until September 24, 1867, when Mark Allison was born, not one child survived infancy.[2]

With the onset of the Civil War, prior to the birth of their son, the Matthewses' lives changed dramatically. Matthews enlisted as part of Georgia's Fifth Regiment, but ill health forced him to return home prematurely, and he turned his carriage business into a repair shop for the Confederate army. By May 1864, General Sherman had begun his march to Atlanta, and Calhoun stood directly in his path. On or about the sixteenth of May, Sherman's troops burned Matthews's shop to the ground, though Matthews and his wife escaped. They later returned to Calhoun and attempted to begin their lives anew.[3]

The Matthews family suffered deeply from the economic dislocation after the war. Typical of many businesses in the South, Matthews's carriage enterprise never regained the level of prosperity it had reached prior to the war. A proud man, Matthews failed to develop a new trade or move into a new line of business. As a consequence, Mark Allison came into a financially impoverished world, and his family eventually needed his help to survive. As soon as he was able, young Matthews went to work at a variety of odd jobs to supplement his father's income. Later in life, Mark Allison Matthews liked to tell people of his work at J. M. Harlin's dry goods store, where he learned the art of salesmanship in the shoe department, and of his service as county treasurer. For a short time he worked at a local printing press, where he learned not only the power of newspapers in shaping local opinion but also a healthy respect for machines. On one occasion a piece of iron flew off the press and narrowly missed decapitating him. Even after he began to preach, Matthews still advertised himself as a salesman of pianos, organs, violins, and guitars. In his adult life, Matthews often told people that his experiences as a young boy helped him learn about the business world, meet different people, and discover that he had the power to persuade others.[4]

We know very little about Mark Allison Matthews's life inside his home. His dress and mannerisms bore the imprint of his Southern upbringing and suggest that his parents desired to fashion him into a gentleman. In the Southern family, the gentleman exercised firm control. He was a commanding presence, well educated, finely formed: in short, the perfect patriarch. "Women, along with children," according to the Southern historian Anne Firor Scott, "were expected to recognize their proper and subordinate place and to be obedient to the head of the family."[5] However, in the Southern mind, the woman was much more than a subservient creature: the ideal Southern woman possessed innocence, beauty, keen perception, grace, and modesty. Revered as

the person who gave society its meaning, the Southern belle conveyed the essence of civilization to her children. Little is known about the Matthewses' home life, but it is likely that his parents expected Mark and his sister, Laura, who was born two years after he was, to fulfill these roles. Mark respected his father but venerated his mother; in his eyes, she was the ideal woman. In his sermons, Matthews would hold to this Southern model when addressing problems of the family and, more specifically, when dealing with the role of women in society.

Young Matthews may also have been influenced by what recent historians have identified as the blend of values associated with the "Lost Cause of the Confederacy" and late Victorianism. One historian has argued that in the South "things spiritual ranked higher than things material," and the Southerner tended to equate things spiritual with the chivalry of the Old South.[6] Historians have argued that this sense of spirituality distinguished Southern culture from Yankee civilization. Northern capitalism, industrialism, and urbanization manifested a crass materialism in the minds of Southern writers and clergy, whereas Southern society reflected more genteel and spiritual values. Many Southerners argued that the Civil War centered on a constitutional principle involving civil liberty and states' rights. After their defeat on the battlefield, the former Confederates still believed that true civilization and true religion flourished below the Mason-Dixon line. This postwar environment encouraged young men like Matthews to value the role of religion in society.

Religion provided the most immediate influence on Mark Matthews's life. Years later the preacher recalled, "I was regenerated when thirteen years of age. The call to preach was as clear and as definite as it could possibly be. I announced to my parents and friends that my life was directed to God's ministry."[7] Apparently, he did not record the details of his conversion, but one can assume that the event for him was similar to that experienced by so many others. It may have happened in the midst of a Sunday morning service as part of a regular altar call, or it might have taken place during a tent revival led by an itinerant evangelist. Whatever the details, the thirteen-year-old Matthews committed his life to Christ; he would later say that he could not get into the pulpit fast enough. "I would go to the church before the hour for the services; gather up hymn books and give them to the people as they entered the building for worship; ring the bell or do any kind of work."[8]

Matthews grew up in America's evangelical subculture—a subculture that transmitted a specific set of values and attitudes for dealing with the secular world. His initial encounter with the evangelical world came with the guidance of his father. The elder Matthews actively participated in the most evangelical wing of the Presbyterian church in the South, the Cumberland church. The Matthews family regularly attended the Liberty Cumberland Presbyterian Church, located just south of Calhoun in a tiny community called Lily Pond. It was in that church that Mark Allison and his sister, Laura, were raised. In 1875, the Reverend Z. M. McGhee organized the Calhoun Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the Matthews family switched its membership and attended for four years until the struggling church folded. Then the family moved back to the Liberty Cumberland church in Lily Pond.[9]

The Cumberland branch of Presbyterians came into existence in 1813 in Kentucky as a result of the breach between Old Side antirevivalists and New Side revivalists. The Old Side emphasized confessional doctrine whereas the New Side, which grew out of the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s, emphasized spiritual conversion. With the Second Great Awakening at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the schism widened. Presbyterians faced significant difficulties in developing congregations on the frontier because, unlike their Methodist and Baptist colleagues, Presbyterians required their clergy to be college educated and to have a seminary degree. As a consequence, many Presbyterian churches did not have pastors. In response, the Cumberland presbytery in Kentucky, with the support of New Side advocates, began in 1837 to ordain and license pastors who had no seminary education. However, the General Assembly and presbytery, the representative body that governed a number of congregations in a geographic region, refused to recognize these pastors as legitimate clergy.

The Cumberland presbytery also made it clear that the concept of election (God's choice of who would be saved) need not be emphasized as strongly as it had been among Old Side proponents who stressed the omnipotence of God in regard to personal salvation. Cumberland preachers tended to place greater responsibility for salvation on the believer. Preachers invited individuals to accept Christ as their Savior; rejection was thought to condemn one to eternal damnation. The resulting controversy ended with a formal schism in 1810

in which the Cumberland presbytery left the main branch of the Presbyterian church. Matthews accepted Old Side or Old School theology, but he never abandoned the evangelical emphasis on conversion and personal commitment to Christ.[10]

One other Cumberland emphasis that may have played a part in shaping Matthews's worldview was the stress on the mission of America. One historian of the Cumberland church asserts that Cumberland Presbyterians believed that "the future of the world depended on the future of America, and the future of America depended on the triumph of the evangelical message."[11] Primarily rural in background, Cumberland Presbyterians believed that cities were dens of iniquity. Cumberland preachers attacked gambling, liquor, tobacco, dancing, card-playing, Sabbath "desecration," and the Roman Catholic church.[12] Another Presbyterian historian concluded that Cumberland members believed that "the blessings God had bestowed on Christian America made the export of its civilization as well as its religion a divine imperative."[13] This missionary zeal, this confidence in American history, and the assumed responsibility for converting the nonbeliever would prove to be rock-solid foundations for the rest of Matthews's career.

A contemporary of Mark Matthews's who was influenced to some degree by the Cumberland experience was William Jennings Bryan. Several of Bryan's biographers assert that the Cumberland experience made the "Great Commoner" much more sympathetic to revivalism, as well as more disposed to seeing politics as a realm in which religious vision should be a driving force. In this respect, Matthews and Bryan, who came to know one another fairly well, had much in common.[14]

The Cumberland experience fostered an atmosphere in which theological discussion focused on the battle between the forces of good and evil. Most evangelicals held that the devil was very much alive and well. The proponents of freedom were matched against tyrannical oppressors, and the children of light fought valiantly against the children of darkness. This worldview had no place for neutrality, complexity, or bystanders. To what extent young Matthews was conscious of these issues is difficult to say. Certainly, it would have been unusual if he had worked out these issues in any systematic form. Yet the vocabulary would have been familiar; *sin, grace, salvation, devil, good,* and *evil* emerged as words and concepts that shaped his thinking and his belief system at an early age. Religious experience, for young Matthews,

meant a heart-felt conversion, a simple piety, and a belief that one lived in the midst of a cosmic struggle between good and evil.

If his father's disposition toward Cumberland Presbyterianism influenced Matthews's early religious inclinations, the development of his more formal theology came largely under the tutoring of Joseph B. Hillhouse. More than any other person, Hillhouse schooled Matthews in the peculiarities of Presbyterian theology and served as his single most important intellectual influence. Born in 1820, Hillhouse graduated from the Presbyterian seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1845 and began preaching the same year. As a student and later as a teacher, Hillhouse earned a reputation as a fine scholar of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew classics.[15]

Residing in South Carolina for nearly thirty years after entering the ministry, Hillhouse decided in 1873 to move to Gordon County, Georgia, where he proceeded to organize the Calhoun Presbyterian Church. By 1879, Hillhouse added to his duties by developing Calhoun's educational institutions. He became principal of the Calhoun Academy, which during the war had served as a horse stable for the Union army. Under Hillhouse's direction, the academy emerged in the 1880s as the most respected educational institution in the county. Hillhouse directed a curriculum that emphasized a classical education. In 1883, townsfolk built a two-story annex to accommodate an increased number of students, and in the following year, the Calhoun Academy officially became the Gordon County University. Shortly thereafter, Mark Matthews attended the institution and began to receive the guidance of Hillhouse's tutorials, with a specific emphasis on theology.[16] Years later, Matthews wrote, "The name [Gordon County University] was only prophetic and pathetic because it was not a university but had a good college curriculum."[17]

Nevertheless, for Matthews, this was the sum of his formal education. Hillhouse introduced him to the formal theological underpinnings not of the Cumberland church but of the Princeton theology, commonly referred to as Old School Presbyterianism, as practiced in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), the formal name for the Southern Presbyterian church.

At Columbia Seminary in South Carolina, founded by graduates of Princeton, Joseph Hillhouse had learned the basics of orthodox Calvinism. Years later, Matthews told an interviewer that Hillhouse "never lost an opportunity to teach me the truth and beauty of Calvinism."[18]

Old School Presbyterians emphasized the omnipotence of God and his divine election as articulated in the Westminster Confession of 1643. The key philosophical underpinnings for Old School Presbyterianism were found in the principles of Scottish common-sense realism. Articulated primarily by Thomas Reid (1710-1796) and Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), common-sense realism attempted to refute the idealism of George Berkeley and the skepticism of David Hume. It supported several key theological conclusions, and, unquestionably, Hillhouse bequeathed this intellectual legacy to Matthews.[19]

Old School Presbyterians appealed to proponents of common-sense realism to affirm the notion that the existence of God could be intuited. Old School Presbyterians found common-sense realism helpful in supporting the belief that the natural world could be studied by the scientific method of observation. They believed that the Bible was a repository of facts that corresponded with the natural world. Scholars at Princeton embraced a Baconian method of induction in order to convince themselves that the Bible was an objective reflection of reality. Princeton theologians consciously embraced a scientific method for studying both the natural and the transcendent world. They asserted that religion and science did not conflict; scientific discoveries, believed Old School Presbyterians, only confirmed the majesty of God's creation. Mark Matthews retained this confidence in Biblical authority throughout his life. He never expressed a doubt that science done properly would always correspond with Biblical truth.[20]

Common-sense realism also helped reinforce for young Matthews the necessity of Biblical revelation for all people. Reid and Stewart had asserted that the mind had finite capabilities and therefore was limited in its ability to understand God. Princeton theologians believed Scripture was necessary to help inform the mind more fully of the nature of God. Armed with the methodology of induction, confident in their defense of revelation and moral precepts, Hillhouse and other Old School Presbyterians attempted to fend off challenges from all sides. They worked assiduously to refute opponents who tried to use reason to dismiss religion, as well as rivals who tried to reduce Christianity to nothing but reason. Children of the moderate wing of the Enlightenment, Princeton Presbyterians were also deeply aware of a more radically skeptical strain of thinking, particularly among the French. Extremely hostile to religion, this radical skepticism sought to juxtapose free inquiry and science against religion and metaphysics. Princeton-trained scholars fervently sought to avoid such a dichotomy and re-

lied heavily on Scottish common-sense assumptions to affirm the compatibility of religion and science.

Perhaps a little more difficult for Matthews to accept was the way in which Old School Presbyterians used common-sense realism to temper excessive evangelism and piety. Princeton Presbyterians often argued that Methodists, Baptists, and many other denominations emphasized the heart at the expense of the head. The pervasive anti-intellectualism of the antebellum period moved Presbyterians to bolster their stated preference for a balance between heart and head by affirming the complementary relationship between religion and science.

By far the most influential effort to integrate the assumptions of Scottish common-sense realism into Protestant theology was that made by Charles Hodge. Teaching at Princeton beginning in 1822, Hodge became the institution's most respected spokesman throughout the nineteenth century by editing the powerful *Princeton Review* and by publishing in 1871 his *Systematic Theology*. Required reading for Matthews, Hodge's works shaped the doctrinal understanding of the young Southerner.

Quite strikingly, Charles Hodge's introduction to his *Systematic Theology* made clear his emphasis on science as the important model for theology.

> The Bible is no more a system of theology, than nature is a system of chemistry or of mechanics. We find in nature the facts which the chemist or the mechanical philosopher has to examine, and from them to ascertain the laws by which they are determined. So the Bible contains the truths which the theologian has to collect, authenticate, arrange, and exhibit in their internal relation to each other.[21]

From the very outset, Hodge emphasized induction as the principal means of scrutinizing the Holy Scriptures. "The Bible is to the theologian what nature is to the man of science," he argued. "It is his storehouse of facts; and his method of ascertaining what the Bible teaches, is the same as that which the natural philosopher adopts to ascertain what nature teaches."[22] The theology of Charles Hodge, conveyed through Joseph Hillhouse, formed the intellectual foundation for young Matthews.[23] Hodge's approach also provided a basis for Matthews's eventual shift toward fundamentalism when he was in Seattle.

The combination of Princeton theology and his parents' frontier religious influence provided Matthews with his intellectual roots and

his pietistic vision. Reared in the American evangelical tradition, Matthews embraced revivalism and appealed to simple piety as the best means to increase the flock. Yet when necessary, he could rely on Old School theology and common-sense realism.

In addition to teaching Princeton theology, Hillhouse helped develop Matthews's approach to pulpit ministry. Hillhouse worked incessantly with Matthews on his speaking style; the older pastor had his young colleague practice enunciating with gravel in his mouth to perfect the projection of his voice. Thus, it was with apparently great confidence that Matthews began preaching in local churches shortly after he graduated. In the spring of 1887 he looked forward to his first major public address: speaking before the graduating class of the university. Tragically, Hillhouse never saw his protégé make his debut. Two weeks prior to Matthews's speech, Hillhouse fell ill and died. Undaunted, Matthews made the address to much acclaim. The local newspapers reported that he spoke in "a masterly way, beautifully illustrating [and] . . . making the thread of connection strikingly visible to the eye of the imagination."[24]

Licensed to preach in 1886 by the Cumberland church, the nineteen-year-old Matthews filled a succession of Presbyterian and Methodist pulpits. Churches in small towns like Calhoun frequently could not pay one minister a full salary, and young pastors like Matthews often "rode the circuit," serving two or three different congregations by alternating Sundays. In October 1887, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church officially ordained Matthews as a minister, since the church did not require seminary training for its pastors. But following the death of Hillhouse, the Calhoun Presbyterian Church, affiliated with the main branch of the Presbyterian church in the South—the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS)—needed a pastor. Unlike the Cumberland branch, the PCUS did require seminary training for its pastors. But perhaps because Matthews had been so close to Hillhouse and the congregation so familiar with the young preacher, he seemed like the natural choice to replace his mentor. The church arranged to circumvent the seminary requirement by having Matthews take an examination, which he passed in January 1890.[25] From the beginning, the young cleric's remarkable energy and his organizational skill impressed the Calhoun congregation. Hillhouse, though greatly beloved, had unsuccessfully attempted for five years to raise enough money to construct a new church. In less than two years, Matthews directed the completion of the building and steadily increased the membership.[26]

From the outset, Matthews possessed a certain flair that caught the attention of both parishioners and the press. He cultivated a sense of distinction at the same time that he exuded an affinity for the common man. He seemed at ease with everyone, from the wealthiest and most powerful to the poorest and the youngest. One of the best contemporary descriptions of Matthews comes from someone who observed him in Chattanooga.

> In appearance, Mr. Matthews is very striking. . . . His face is small, devoid of beard or mustache, and exceptionally strong. His forehead is very high, and as the hair is worn long and very curly, and combed well back, this feature appears very prominent. In his dress, Mr. Matthews, as a minister, is also quite out of the ordinary run. His clothing is of the very latest cut, and fits him to perfection. He wears a high standing collar, white lawn tie, low-cut vest, and in the midst of a broad expanse of immaculate white shirt bosom there glitters and glistens a magnificent diamond stud.[27]

In contrast to Matthews's rather imposing image in the pulpit, Calhoun residents saw him invite all of the town children to go fishing with him at a nearby creek. Telling them to bring biscuit, worm, and pole, the young preacher found his favorite fishing hole and undoubtedly entertained youngsters with stories containing a moral lesson. All through his life, Matthews developed warm relationships with children.[28]

Matthews's early ministry in Georgia during the 1880s and 1890s established most of the fundamental patterns that would endure for the rest of his career. Matthews did not emphasize the finer points of theology but stressed the importance of the church as a place where one committed to serving Christ, studied the Bible, learned the appropriate Christian lifestyle, and served the social needs of the community. Most of his early sermons, in fact, are noteworthy for the absence of theology and the stress on common sense and simple piety. Matthews preached a simple straightforward message to his flock; he exhorted them to believe in Christ as their personal savior, to love their fellow human beings, and to apply Christian principles to the social and political problems of the community.

Matthews's methods and approach remained remarkably consistent throughout his ministry. He built church membership through a combination of local revivals and consistently stimulating preaching. He organized the membership into a variety of groups and worked