



# **Naked Faith: The Mystical Theology of Phoebe Palmer (Princeton Theological Monograph Series)**

*Elain A. Heath*

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Description: Now and then through the history of the church a great light appears, a prophet who calls the church back to its missional vocation. These reformers are lovers of God, mystics whose lives are utterly given to the divine vision. Yet as Jesus noted, a prophet is often without honor among her own people. In the case of Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), honor was lost posthumously, for within a few decades after her death her name all but disappeared. Palmer's sanctification theology was separated from its apophatic spiritual moorings, even as her memory was lost. Throughout most of the twentieth century her name was virtually unknown among Methodists. To this day the Mother of the Holiness Movement still awaits her place of recognition as a Christian mystic equal to Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, or Thérèse of Lisieux. This book locates Palmer's life and thought within the great Christian mystical traditions, identifying her importance within Methodism and the church universal. It also presents a Wesleyan theological framework for understanding and valuing Christian mysticism, while connecting it with the larger mystical traditions in Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox communions. While Palmer was a powerful revivalist in her own day, in many ways she could be the patron saint for contemporary Methodists who are drawn to the new monasticism and who long for the renewal of the church. Saint Phoebe is precisely the one who can help Methodists envision new forms of Christian community, mission, and witness in a postmodern world.

Endorsements: ""Through her perceptive and balanced retrieval of the Christian mystical tradition, Elaine Heath challenges us all with a superbly argued and persuasive presentation of Phoebe Palmer as a major mystical theologian within the Methodist and Wesleyan traditions, one who is a rich gift to the church catholic as a whole."" --William Thompson-Uberuaga, Duquesne University ""Heath's giftedness as a scholar and teacher of Christian faith and practice are clear in this work. The recovery of Phoebe Palmer as mystic and prophet within a Wesleyan theological frame offers an important contribution to both scholars within theological education and the church. This text is remarkably multi-faceted in the accessible way it complicates previous categories allowing the past to inform faithful Christian witness in the twenty-first century."" --Lacey Warner, Duke University Divinity School ""Elaine Heath herself says it best: 'Saint Phoebe is precisely the one who can help Methodists envision new forms of Christian community, mission, and witness in a postmodern world.' Indeed, Phoebe Palmer can also help Methodists recover ancient forms of Christian community, mission, and witness. This book is about more than Phoebe Palmer. Heath restores to us our apophatic and mystical theological foundations, carried by Palmer's theology, as the fertile soil for growing new faith-forms that can bear much fruit."" --Amy G. Oden, Wesley Theological Seminary About the Contributor(s): Elaine A. Heath is Assistant Professor of Evangelism in the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. She is the author of *The Mystic Way of Evangelism* (2008).

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