

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF
MORMON GROUP LIFE**

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The psychological and ethical aspects of Mormon group life by Ephraim Edward Ericksen

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By

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TO MY
FATHER AND MOTHER

PREFACE

It is the purpose of this work to interpret the life-history of the Mormon group in the scientific spirit, and, in so far as the present methods of social and psychological investigation are adequate, to get at fundamental psychological and ethical principles. I realize, however, that the Mormon group life is extremely complex, as is every social unit, and cannot be stated in simple terms. I realize also my own limitations in dealing with the problem. One who has been associated all his life with the Mormon people, as I have been, is sure to have formed prejudices and conceptions which render an objective and impartial study of them extremely difficult. But on the other hand, the inner life of the group, its sentiments, and ideals, can be comprehended only by one who has actually experienced them. I therefore regard myself as justified in attempting to describe and interpret the sentiments which I have to a certain extent experienced in common with the group.

In this work I do not pretend to give a detailed account of Mormon history. The accounts of historical events have been purposely reduced to very brief statements in order to give greater prominence to the psychological aspects of the different situations in which the Mormon group was placed. It is the group sentiments with which we are here concerned, and particularly the genetic development of Mormon group consciousness.

In so far as I have succeeded in making this work scientific it has been through the influence of the instructors in the departments of philosophy and political economy in the University of Chicago. I am especially indebted to Professors James H. Tufts, George H. Mead, and Edward S. Ames, for the ethical and psychological point of view. For methods of investigation and organization of material I must acknowledge the help which I have received from the late Professor Robert Hoxie and from Professor James Laurence Laughlin, of the Department of Political Economy.

In the collecting of the material as well as its interpretation I am deeply indebted to my wife, who collected much valuable source material which I otherwise would not have received.

EPHRAIM EDWARD ERICKSEN