

Chapter 5

PERFECTING AND PURIFYING THE LORD'S PEOPLE

After crossing the mighty Mississippi, many Latter-day Saints looked back and saw for the last time a majestic temple that overlooked a great horseshoe bend in the river. One of these pioneers, Wandle Mace, aptly described his feelings as he reflected on his experience in Nauvoo. “Farewell to the temple upon which I have labored with so much pleasure,” he wrote. It was a temple

in which the ordinances of the Holy Priesthood might be administered to the living and for the dead, in this generation. The order of architecture was unlike anything in existence. . . . The cost was so great, it was said by some that the state of Illinois could not have built such a costly building without bankrupting the state. Yet this was built by the energy, tithes and offerings of an honest, although a poor, persecuted people.¹

When Wandle Mace summarized some of the greatest blessings he received in Nauvoo he emphasized that in the temple he received his wife in the new and everlasting covenant, “the celestial or eternal marriage covenant, a covenant which binds for time and all eternity. What a grand and glorious provision for the future,” he added, that an eternal union can be “formed here on earth between a man and his wife (and their children) [that] . . . shall last to all eternity.”²