

Richmond

Decr 23rd 1838

Dear Sir

I have recently seen Col Price, who made known to me the object of his mission to this part of the State. In reference to the lawless depredations said to be practiced on the Mormons, I have no doubts that the charges are to a certain extent true, and I have as little doubt that the perpetrators of them can be effectually brought to justice by the civil authorities. If, instead of writing those inflammatory letters to members of the Legislature, these same men would come before me and give such information as the law requires against these lawless characters, I should bring them to an immediate account, and I am satisfied there is virtue enough in this community to aid and sustain me in so laudable an undertaking. I have heard frequent complaints, and have uniformly ^{instituted} them to institute a legal investigation, but no person has thought proper to do so.

In most of the cases of outrage against the property of Mormons, it has been by persons who pretend, and perhaps truly, that the Mormons owe them, or by persons who say that the Mormons, in their late outrages upon them, have destroyed their property, and they take this means to indemnify themselves. This certainly is an unlawful and highly objectionable course. But I think it very ungracious in Mr Arthur to charge it upon the citizens of the surrounding counties, exempting his own county of Clay. If rumor be true, he himself has been very extensive-
-ly engaged in collecting his Mormon
15 debt, its property chiefly, and at prices less than half what would be asked or given in ordinary cases. This, with me is only rumor, but there are men who say so, who

an equally respectable with Mr Arthur. As it regards the Military force recommended by him, I should look upon it as a direct impu-
-ation upon the power and efficacy of the civil authorities, to maintain the law in ordinary cases, and would, in effect, be reversing that salutary constitution-
-al principle which renders the Military subordinate to the civil authority.

I cannot but express regret that the time, in my opinion is not very distant when we shall have the same scene to go through with the Mormons that we have lately wit-
-nessed. If the Mormons would disperse and not gather into exclusive communities of their own, I think with the exception of a few of their leaders, the people might be reconciled to them, but this they utterly refuse to do, they tell me that it would amount to an aban-
-donment of their creed & religion, for they believe, you know, in the gathering together of the Saints, and that they shall come out from the world, (Suggest the matter to them as I have done, for the sake of their peace and safety, and they will give you many scriptural reasons why they should not do so. The Mormons appear lately to have taken new courage, and appear to be determined not to move; the citizens are equally deter-
-mined they shall, for nothing but expulsions or the other alternative will satisfy this community, that is, if the Mormons hold out under their former principles and practices. This I know is strong doctrine, for some of the mem-
-bers, and such as I have not encour-
-aged, occupying the stations I do, either by act or expression, yet I can easily find men in this community, noted for their good moral character, and comit-
-15 department, who are determined the Mormons shall not reside among them. The alternative is presented, the expulsions

of the mormons, or the virtual relin-
quishment of their own homes.

There has been from parts of this state,
as well as from other states highly
respectable gentlemen, who came
among us with all their sympathies
and prejudices enlisted in favor
of the mormons, but after travelling
through the country, hearing
~~and seeing what they did,~~
undergo an entire change of
opinion, such as has frequently
astounded me.

I have written this letter to you
in conformity with the request
made by you through Col Price
in reference to the necessity of a
military force to sustain and
uphold the laws.

I am

very respectfully
Your friend
Austin A. King