Washington, Feb. 20, 1848-

Dear Sinner:

In law it is good policy to never plead what you need not, lest you oblige yourself to prove what you can not. Reflect on this well before you proceed. The application I mean to make of this rule is, that you should simply go for Genl. Taylor, because by this, you can take some democrats, and bow no whigs; but if you go also for Mr. Polk in the origin and mode of prosecuting the war, you will still take some democrats, but you will lose more whigs, so that in the view of the opposition, you will be false. This is at least my opinion, and if you will look careful, I am sure, if you do not discern such to be the fact amongst you own neighbors. Further than this: By justifying Mr. Polk's mode of prosecuting the war, you put yourself in opposition to Genl. Taylor himself, for we all know he has declared for, and in fact originated the defensive line policy.

You know I mean this in kindness, and I wish it to be understood.

Yours as ever.

A. Lincoln