

Letter from John Donne to Sir George More, 1601/1602 March 1: autograph manuscript signed, Papers of the More family of Loseley Park, Surrey. Transcription by Early Modern Manuscripts Online (EMMO). MS L.b.532, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.

leaf 1 recto

S^r

If I could fear, y^t in so much worthynes as ys in yo^w, there were no Mercy, or yf these waights opprest onely my shoulders, and my fortunes, and not my conscience, and hers, whose good ys dearer to me by much than my lyfe, I should not thus troble yo^w wth my l^rs. But when I see that this storme hath shakd me at roote, in my lords fauor, wher I was well planted, and haue iust reason to fear, that those yll reports w^{ch} Malice hath raysd of me, may haue trobled her, I can leaue no honest way vntryed to remedy these miseryes, nor find any way more honest then this, owt of an humble and repentant hart, for the fault donne to yo^w, to beg both yo^r pardon and assistance in my suite to my l. I should wrong yo^w as much againe, as I did, if I should think yo^w sought to destroy me. but though I be not hedlongly destroyd, I languish, and rust dangerously. from seeking p^rferm^{ts} abroad, my loue and Conscience restrains me. from hoping for them here, my lords disgracings cut me of. My Emprisonm^{ts}, and theyrs whose loue to me brought them to yt, hath already cost me 40^l. And the love of my frinds, though yt be not vtterly grounded vpon my fortunes, yet I know suffers somewhat, in these long and vncertain disgraces of myne. I therefore humbly beseech yo^w, to haue so charitable a pittie, of what I haue, and do, and must suffer, as to take to yo^r selfe the Comfort, of hauing saved from such destruction, as yo^r iust Anger might haue layd upon him a sorowfull and honest man. I was bold in my last letter to beg leaue of yo^w, that I might wright to yo^r Daughter. Though I vnderstood therupon, that after the Thursday yo^w were not displeasd that I should, yet I haue not nor wyll not wthowt y^r knowledge do yt. But now I beseech yo^w that I may; since I protest before god, yt is the greatest of my afflictions, not to do yt. In all the world ys not more true sorrow, then in my hart, nor more und{er}standing of true repentance then in yo^{rs}; And therefore God, whose pardon in such cases ys never denyed, gives me leaue to hope, that yo^w wyll fauorably consider my necessities. To his mercifull guiding, and protection I commend yo^w, and cease to troble yo^w. 1^o Mart: i60i.

Yo^rs in all humblenes
and dutifull obedience
I: Donne

leaf 1 verso || leaf 2 recto

leaf 2 verso

To the right worshipfull
S^r George More knight.