

**Letter from John Donne, Fleet Prison, to Sir George More, 1601/1602
February 11: autograph manuscript signed, Papers of the More family of
Loseley Park, Surrey. Transcription by Early Modern Manuscripts Online
(EMMO). MS L.b.527, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.**

leaf 1 recto

S^r

The inward accusacons in my Conscience, that I haue offended
yo^w, beyond any ability of redeeming yt by me, and the feeling
of my lords heauy displeasure, following yt, forceth me to wright
though I know my fault make my l^rs very vngracious to yo^w.
Allmighty God whom I call to witnesse, that all my greife
ys, that I haue in this manner offended yo^w, and him, direct
yo^w to beleeeue, that wthowt of an humble and afflicted hart
I now wright to yo^w And since we haue no meanes to move
God, when we he wyll not hear or prayers, to hear them, but by
prayeng, I humbly beseech yo^w, to allow, by his gracious exam=
ple, my penitence so good Entertainmt, as yt may haue a bee=
leife, and a pittie. Of nothings in this one fault, that I
hear layd to me, can I disculpe my selfe, but of the contem=
tuous and despightfull purpose towards yo^w, w^{ch} I hear ys sur=
mised against me. But for my dutifull regard to my late
lady, for my Religion, and for my lyfe, I refer my selfe
to them, that may have observd them. I humbly beseeche
yo^w, to take of these waytes, and to put my fault into the
balance alone, as yt was donne, wthowt the addi^con of these
yll reports And though then yt wyll be to heauy for
me, yett then yt wyll less greiue yo^w to pardon yt. How
litle and how short the comfort and pleasure of Destroy=
eng ys, I know y^r wisdome and Religion informs yo^w. And
though perchance yo^w intend not vtter Destruction, yett
the way through w^{ch} I fall towards yt, ys so headlong,
that beeing thus pushd, I shall soone be at bottome. ffor
yt pleaseth God, from whom I acknowledge the punishmt
to be iust, to accompany my other ylls, wth so much sicknes
as I have noe refuge, but that of Mercy, w^{ch} I beg, of

leaf 1 verso

of him, my l, and yo^w w^{ch} I hope yo^w wyll not repent
to haue afforded me, since all my Endevors, and the whole
course of my lyfe shalbe bent, to make my selfe worthy
of her^{^yo^r} fauor, and her loue, whose peace of Conscience,
and quiett, I know must be much wounded and violencd,
if y^r displeasure sever vs. I can psent nothing to y^r
thoughts, w^{ch} yo^w knew not before, but my submission, my
repentance, and my harty desire, to do any thing satis=
factory to y^r iust displeasure: of w^{ch} I beseech yo^w to

make a charitable vse and Construction. from the
fleete 11^o febr: 1601

Yo^{rs} in all faythfull duty
and obedience.
I. Donne

leaf 2 recto

leaf 2 verso

To the right wor^{ll}
S^r George More knight.