

**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. Almighty God whom I call to witness, 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 beeleife, and a pittie. Of nothings in this one fault, that I hear layd to me, can I disculpe my selfe, but of the contemtuous and despightfull purpose towards yo^w, w^{ch} I hear ys surmised 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 haue 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^on 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 Destroyeng 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 hartly desire, to do any thing satisfactory 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.