

**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**

Sir

The inward accusations in my Conscience, that I have offended you, beyond any ability of redeeming it by me, and the feeling of my lords heavy displeasure, following it, forces me to write though I know my fault make my letters very ungracious to you. Almighty God whom I call to witness, that all my grief is, that I have in this manner offended you, and him, direct you to believe, that without of an humble and afflicted heart I now write to you And since we have no means to move God, when we he will not hear our prayers, to hear them, but by praying, I humbly beseech you, to allow, by his gracious example, my penitence so good Entertainment, as it may have a belief, and a pity. Of nothing in this one fault, that I hear laid to me, can I disculp myself, but of the contemptuous and despiteful purpose towards you, which I hear is surmised against me. But for my dutiful regard to my late lady, for my Religion, and for my life, I refer myself to them, that may have observed them. I humbly beseech you, to take of these weights, and to put my fault into the balance alone, as it was done, without the addition of these ill reports And though then it will be to heavy for me, yet then it will less grieve you to pardon it. How little and how short the comfort and pleasure of Destroying is, I know your wisdom and Religion informs you. And though perchance you intend not utter Destruction, yet the way through which I fall towards it, is so headlong, that being thus pushed, I shall soon be at bottom. for it pleases God, from whom I acknowledge the punishment to be just, to accompany my other ills, with so much sickness as I have no refuge, but that of Mercy, which I beg, of

**leaf 1 verso**

of him, my lord, and you which I hope you will not repent to have afforded me, since all my Endeavours, and the whole course of my life shall be bent, to make myself worthy of ~~her~~ your favor, and her love, whose peace of Conscience, and quiet, I know must be much wounded and violenced, if your displeasure sever us. I can present nothing to your thoughts, which you knew not before, but my submission, my repentance, and my hearty desire, to do any thing satisfactory to your just displeasure: of which I beseech you to make a charitable use and Construction. from the

fleet 11<sup>th</sup> February 1601

Yours in all faithful duty  
and obedience.  
John Donne

**leaf 2 recto**

**leaf 2 verso**

To the right worshipful  
Sir George More knight.