

**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 haue offended
yow, 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 *letters* very vngracious to yow.
Allmighty God whom I call to witnesse, that all my greife
ys, that I haue in this manner offended yow, and him, direct
yow to beleue, that withowt of an humble and afflicted hart
I now wright to yow And since we haue no meanes to move
God, when we he wyll not hear *our* prayers, to hear them, but by
prayeng, I humbly beseech yow, to allow, by his gracious exam=
ple, my penitence so good Entertainment, as yt may haue a bee=
leife, and a pittie. Of nothinge in this one fault, that I
hear layd to me, can I disculpe my selfe, but of the contem=
tuous and despightfull purpose towards yow, *which* 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 haue observd them. I humbly beseeche
yow, to take of these waytes, and to put my fault into the
balance alone, as yt was donne, withowt the addicion of these
yll reports And though then yt wyll be to heauy for
me, yett then yt wyll less greiue yow to pardon yt. How
litle and how short the comfort and pleasure of Destroy=
eng ys, I know *your* wisdome and Religion informs yow. And
though perchance yow intend not vtter Destruction, yett
the way through *which* 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 punishment
to be iust, to accompany my other ylls, with so much sicknes
as I have noe refuge, but that of Mercy, *which* I beg, of

leaf 1 verso

of him, my *lord*, and yow *which* I hope yow wyll not repent
to haue afforded me, since all my Endeavors, and the whole
course of my lyfe shalbe bent, to make my selfe worthy
of her^{^your} fauor, and her loue, whose peace of Conscience,
and quiett, I know must be much wounded and violencd,
if *your* displeasure sever vs. I can present nothing to *your*
thoughts, *which* yow knew not before, but my submission, my
repentance, and my harty desire, to do any thing satis=
factory to *your* iust displeasure: of *which* I beseech yow to
make a charitable vse and Construction. from the

fleete 11^o februarii 1601

Yours in all faythfull duty
and obedience.

I. Donne

leaf 2 recto

leaf 2 verso

To the right *worshipfull*
Sir George More knight.