

**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.**

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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. Almighty 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 example, my penitence so good Entertainment, as yt may haue a beleife, and a pittie. Of nothinge in this one fault, that I hear layd to me, can I disculpe my selfe, but of the contemptuous and despightfull purpose towards yow, *which* 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 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 Destroyeng 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 satisfactory 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.