

Letter from Christopher Brooke, Marshalsea Prison, to Sir Thomas Egerton, 1601/1602 February 25: autograph manuscript signed, Papers of the More family of Loseley Park, Surrey. Transcription by Early Modern Manuscripts Online (EMMO). MS L.b.531, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.

leaf 1 recto

May it please your good Lordship
What mine offence is, being singled out by it self, none can better
judge then your Honor, who understand what man can understand,
& justly censure greater every day. And perhaps it should
be indiscreetly done, to offer to your Lordship's ears (filled necessarily
every hour with the complaints of the whole Realm) such circumstances,
as might diminish this poor fault of ~~myne~~ mine. Therefore
I spare, yet will be bold, my Lord, to say, that they are as
many, as those that can be found out to aggravate the same.
My Lord, it was enjoined, that I should make some submission. I
have drawn one out of my heart, & wrote it with mine own
hand, & sent it to his Grace, & the Rest of the Commissioners
for those causes wherein I have confessed mine offence against
the Canon Laws, & Constitutions provincial of this Realm, &
have testified my sorrow for the whole fact. What other
satisfaction I (but such an offender as I am) should make, I
know not, but I always submit myself. for Sir George
More (my Lord) I knew then neither his parson nor his Estate,
much less that worthy favor, in which (your Lordship witness) he stands with
your Honor. for, my Lord, if I had (as unwise as I am) I would
have chosen rather to have undergone for Mr Donne some other
more apparent danger. And pardon me a word for him my Lord,
were it not now best, that every one, whom he any way concerns,
should become his favorer or his friend, who wants (my good Lord)
but fortunes hands & tongue to rear him up, & set him out.
for my part, my Lord, besides these other things I am held from the
sitting at York, already four days since begun, where (in
my silly fortune, such as it is) my profitablest practise lies.
And I protest, my Lord, that thereby I am endangered to loose my
mothers favor, whom I seem to forsake in her greatest
businesses, whose favor is the best part of my strength & means
of well-doing. Wherefore my humble request unto your Lordship
is, that you would be so good Lord unto me as to discharge me &
my sureties of that Recognisance of 4500 1100^{lb}. That when it shall
please his Grace & the Rest to deliver me from the Marshalsea,
whereof I have hope I may no longer, my Lord, be staid from those
businesses in the Country, whereof I have now more, then yet in all
my life I ever had. Thus I most humbly take my leave, &
betake your Lordship to God's protection. This 25th of February 1601. from
the Marshalsea.

your Honor's in all humble service

ever to be commanded
Christopher Brooke

leaf 1 verso

leaf 2 recto

leaf 2 verso

To the Right Honorable Sir
Thomas Egerton knight
Lord Keeper of the great
Seal of England