

Ebbo of Reims, *Apologeticum (forma posterior)*

(ca. 841–842)

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Translated by

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All men of this empire and beyond know in truth how many wicked things have sprung up on account of our sins in this, our own time – indeed, no one remains whom this disturbance has not afflicted, neither poor nor rich man alike. The rich have had no respite, the poor have suffered great oppression, there has not been even a pittance of mercy shown to orphans and widows. In churches and many other
5 places, murders and numerous acts of arson have been committed, and thus, for many days now, true justice has scarcely been kept in any part of this dominion (*dominationis*), while exceedingly rare are those who have had any concern for Christian peace or reverence for the churches of God. On account of this, many powerful men (*potentes*) were driven from their land (*patria*), bishops and other clerics were sent into exile and imprisoned, and thus a vast number of crimes were perpetrated against the
10 Christian faith. Consequently, grudges, quarrels, dissension, and deceit began to occur among our princes, just as it was written concerning these very things: *They who speak peace with their neighbour, but have evils in their hearts* (Vulg. Ps. 27:3). With respect to these things, that wretched misery now reigns as was divinely foretold, when the Lord spoke about this most recent and perishing age: *Brother shall also deliver up brother to death, and the father the son: and the children shall rise up against their parents* (Matt.
15 10:21), and all the other fearful things that the King of kings and Lord of lords foretold regarding the destruction of this wicked world, so that he might restrain all of his faithful from a worldly love, as it was written: *He who will be the friend of this world, will be reckoned as the enemy of God* (Jac. 4:4).

Accordingly, I exhort and encourage all the faithful, the friends of God, and especially my dearly beloved that, when all these troubles, namely present and eternal dangers, are discerned, each man not neglect to act – if not better, then nevertheless – just as I myself did in [the face of] such difficulties: [that is,] in accordance with the counsel of the holy scriptures. By undertaking penance for our sins, every evil may be turned to good, as was divinely promised and made manifest. For just as the fool or the wicked person with a hardened heart, by murmuring amid divine scourges, may come to ruin, the person with compunction rather may gain the forgiveness of sins, as it is written: *A contrite and humbled heart God shall not despise* (Vulg. Ps. 50:19), and again: *I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he turn and live* (Ezek. 18:23; 33:11). Let it not be as it is said about the foolish and the wicked, when the Lord declared, *I have struck them and they have not received correction* (Jer. 2:30). Indeed, happy is the man whom God sets apart and deems worthy to castigate in this life, so that [His] servant may not be castigated by even greater punishments in the future, as scripture attests, which says: *For whom God loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth* (Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:6). Many evils often arise in [times of] abundance and security – that is, vainglory, pride, avarice, frivolity, vanity, drunkenness, gluttony, overindulgence, and all other kinds of miseries, which in a good time change for the better, [whereby] a man might gain for himself everlasting joy, whereas the idle man is deserving of hellish torments. Truly the love of God has been neglected and the love of this world kindled by carnal delights, about which the Lord bears witness, saying: *That the works thereof are evil* (Jn. 7:7), whence scripture commands the rich: *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world, because if any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him* (1 Jn. 2:15). Indeed, unless they do penance, the lovers of this world and all those living in accord with it are not only deservedly punished, but also condemned together with this world, about which the holy apostle, guarding against this danger amid troubles, has this to say to his fellow Christians: *But when we are punished, we are chastised by the Lord, that we not be condemned with this world* (1 Cor. 11:32). Therefore, murmuring and a hardening of the heart amid difficulties should be avoided, since the Almighty rightly shows [His] contempt by two kinds of scourges: on the one hand, He castigates the contrite and penitent man by scourges, so that He may recall [him] to a better life; on the other hand, He torments the perverse man persisting in his impiety, so that, deserving of double punishment, [the perverse man], delivered to hellish punishments, may experience the worst things without end. [This is] because he who refused to understand during good times that he should live rightly, at least in bad times might submit to divine corrections, lest he, who was found guilty in [both] prosperous and hostile [times], become lost to double damnation, now and forever. Indeed, he is deservedly judged as an impious man who in neither time took proper care for himself to become pious. This explains *He that loveth iniquity*, as it is written, *hateth his own soul* (Vulg. Ps. 10:6), as if it were plainly saying: “*He that loveth not justice, hateth his own soul,*” since a manner of life concerned with

iniquities loves its own ruin – that is, by loving something else over the Creator of his life, or [by loving] his neighbor not as himself, as it is written: *He that loveth not, abideth in death* (1 Jn 3:14). For just as the body dies without the soul, so too is the soul, having lost the grace of its Creator, condemned to an even worse death. Therefore, if equity is to love justice – that is, to keep with the whole heart the covenant of love with the Lord God, and the commandment of what is owed to one’s neighbor – [then] each man will love God more than himself and truly love his neighbor as himself. But if iniquity is shown to be whatever is neglected in both [aspects], [then] to God he will be clearly considered an enemy, who is discovered not to be a true friend with wholehearted love, as the Lord says: *He that is not with me, is against me* (Lk. 11:23). For although it is not by [their] imitating the lovers of this world in their works but by showing approval to them that [such men] have been found out, nevertheless they will by no means be deemed friends who exalt in anything other than the Lord.

Accordingly, since these and other divine precepts have been neglected, our sins have been multiplied through the powerful goads of our original vices, by which the conscience of mortals is incessantly tormented: when wrath surmounts the seat of man’s weakness (*humanae fragilitatis animus*), [or when] envy inflames, [or] pride puffs up [or] discord disturbs, [or] hatred strikes, [hatred] which is divinely deemed as murder, as the holy apostle attests: *He who hateth his brother is a murderer* (1 Jn. 3:15). On account of such sins, the greatest necessity drives us backsliders (*lapsos*) to come before the Lord’s presence in confession, as we are proven guilty by divine testimony, since no man is good except God alone, and as the Holy Spirit bears witness through the prophet: *Every man is a liar* (Vulg. Ps. 115:11), and again, *They have spoken vain things every one to his neighbor* (Vulg. Ps. 11:3). Whence, the one who loves vanity doubtless pursues a lie. Now, by no means can a lie be a very small sin, [since it is a sin] by which God is neglected, a neighbor deceived, [and] even the deceiver himself comes to ruin. Such a [vain] man is made guilty and impious, because by acting and agreeing with the lovers of this world, he will be condemned by God as troublesome or an enemy.

Having considered these most dreadful divine offenses, deadly perils from which no one is excepted (unless he is the one and only born without sin) – as sacred scripture attests, *All have turned out of the way; they are become unprofitable together, there is none that doth good* (Rom. 3:12) – I exhort all the more candidly to all the wise and unwise, with whom I am a sinner, that they should take note to what extent in every moment ([and] how much more in [times of] afflictions and difficulties), by confessing his sins, each man, humiliated no less than I, should not scorn to reconcile himself with all [his] might to divine and fraternal mercy. [I make this exhortation] because, admonished by three divine scourges – that is, by the prince’s wrath, by having been deprived of everything, and above all, by an illness of the body – I learned not to murmur or quarrel, but through the example of the holy patriarchs to assuage the wrath of [those] seeking vengeance by [making] humble satisfaction. [Held] in divine

disfavour and rebuked by my own accusations, I did not delay to say with blessed Job: *I have sinned, what shall I do to thee, O keeper of men?* (Job 7:20) For this same reason, [following Job's holy example], I censure myself and do penance. To be sure, penance and a humble satisfaction from the beginning have always merited not condemnation, but redemption, as the Lord showed when He did not condemn the publican, who had humbled and accused himself, but rather forgave him. Concerning this, the Lord did not say: *Every one that humbleth himself shall be condemned, but exalted* (Lk. 18:14). Moreover, He did not permit any man to stone the adulteress, who should have been condemned by legal statutes, unless [that man was] without sin, and He declares that God does not correct the just unless in mercy, saying: *The just shall correct me in mercy* (Vulg. Ps. 140:5). How, therefore, will the sinner rightfully condemn the sinner, if it is not [even] permitted that the just correct without mercy? Likewise, divine mercy entrusted the man who was cast down and half-alive by robbers (that is, by mortal sins) to the care of the holy innkeepers (*stabulariis*), who possess the power of binding and loosing; [he was entrusted to their care] not for the purpose of his being condemned, but being restored. To these holy innkeepers [the Lord] advised that they spend over and above an abundance of sympathizing and restoring, not only from the payment of the two denarii, but truly from their own mercy of generosity, when He said: *Whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee* (Lk. 10:35). Such authority from heaven was shown no less clearly to have been restored to the disciples: during the Lord's passion, the steadfastness of their perseverance was promised, yet soon was [demonstrated to be] false; nevertheless, after the Resurrection, their unbelief and foolish hardness of heart was [merely] rebuked. Similarly, Peter's anxious denial did not merit ruin, but forgiveness. In all these faults, compunct men, although rebuked, were by no means cast down, but rather restored to their original honors (*dignitatibus*) and strove vigorously thereafter to serve the Master's commandments until their death.

To be sure, I was inspired by such divine blessings [and] felt remorse with respect to my aforementioned offenses. If I neglected the Lord's law in prosperous times, having been compelled (*compulsus*) I returned to it in times of adversity, so that if I unlawfully harmed anyone, I decided to suffer the giving of harm at least in times of adversity. If I unjustly took something from anyone, by no means did I resist being deprived of everything, but rather, with my tunic having been removed, I even gave up my cloak (*pallium*). If I neglected certain friends, I surely did not refuse to love [my] enemies [or] pray for [my] persecutors. Thus, with humble satisfaction, I sought more to assuage the fury of wrathful men than to incite them to worse things, as the Lord teaches. And just as then, [when] amid afflictions (*in pressuris*) at a council of clerics, in a private conversation with three close friends, I seized upon that most faithful first pronouncement of the Lord's preaching, saying: *Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt. 4:17), so too now, with the seven-year period having been completed in which forgiveness is customarily practiced in the Holy Church for other penitents of the most severe offences,

120 I open up (*pando*) my same conscience to the faithful men of God, the help of whose merits I, a
suppliant, willingly accept for myself in order to obtain eternal aid. [I do this] so that, lest our labour be
in vain, the beginning of my devotion may be deserving of perfection in the Lord at least on the Last Day
by [my] living justly and piously. In this way, I may be deserving to lament worthily over the past and,
Christ willing, I may be able to be more wary of present and future wrongs. *But the Lord, our king before*
125 *ages, who hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth* (Vulg. Ps. 73:12), made known that it is the joy of
the angels in heaven over one sinner doing penance. Therefore, it is perilous for mortals to despise on
earth those things that, by the truth of so great a witness, it is clear the angels in heaven rejoice. But if
my injurious conduct shall have no further dominion over me, I believe that, having been cleansed by a
font of tears and with other laments at whatever time, *I shall keep myself from my iniquity and I shall be*
130 *cleansed from the greatest sin* (Vulg. Ps. 17:24; 18:14).

Therefore, not with feigned (*ficta*) but a most pious resolve (*intentione*) – with no man judging or
prohibiting [me], but [rather] with the entire kindly assembly in approval, by order of the Lord, for the
purpose of concord and brotherly reconciliation – I left up to now the offering of my oblation before
the altar until ecclesiastical concord was obtained. And then, confident (*fidus*) by divine inspiration,
135 coming forth I was content to offer my gift (cf. Matt. 5:24), if only from my own writings, as it were, with
a certain irrevocable declaration (*sententia*) that had been drawn up for me. If any doubt should cause
anyone to stumble (*scandalizet*), behold: appended here is the same text of the treatise, without
alteration, copied word for word, so that it may satisfy the brother who stumbles (*scandalizanti*), since
this [text] by no means accuses anyone of a specific crime, saying:

140 “I Ebbo, unworthy bishop, recognizing my weakness and the weight of my sins, appointed for myself,
as judges of my transgressions, [these] witnesses, my confessors, namely Archbishop Aiulf and
Bishop Badarad as well as Bishop Modoin. I gave a pure confession to them, seeking the remedy
of doing penance and the salvation of my soul, so that I may resign from the priestly office and
145 ministry, of which I recognize myself to be unworthy. Making myself an outcast on account of my
offenses, I confessed secretly to the [three] men that I had sinned; [I did it] in this way so that these
same men might be witnesses for another who should succeed [me] and should be consecrated and
put in my place as a substitute [as archbishop of Reims], one who may worthily preside over and be
useful to the church, over which I have unworthily presided until now. And therefore, so that
150 henceforth I may not be able to make a reclamation [of the see] or appeal by way of canonical
authority, signing below with my own hand I have confirmed it.”

Have I not kept this treatise inviolate on my part? Why, therefore, has no one been consecrated there [in Reims], if it was able to be done canonically, now that the seven-year period [of my penance] is complete? To be sure, the very church over which I had presided, and for which I have been harassed, has been struck down by various afflictions (*pressuris*). This [church], now torn apart by foreign enemies both visible and invisible, impressed upon (*compulit*) me necessary arguments for escaping [them], pointing out the example of the Lord, who, wishing to avoid the hands of his pursuers, *hid himself and went out of the temple* (Jn 8:59), and followed holy Abraham, who in times of peril preferred to excuse himself from the rule of his wife rather than to quarrel with rapacious and most covetous hands. (cf. Gen. 20:11 ff.) Therefore, the crowd [in Reims], by duly pleading [on my behalf], prevailed more than my devotion of keeping quiet in solitude [did], whence the aforementioned three officials, the bishops of my salvation, having followed my conscience [and] feeling pity for my necessities, dutifully kept it concealed from the communicants until now. Despite these same transgressions of mine having been seized upon and made public, [the 3 bishops] never hesitated to rejoice at my restitution during their days together with the other true brothers. For in such afflictions (*in pressuris*) that treatise, not of condemnation but of seizure, [which] was necessarily found to be without a specific crime, was made public and praised by worthy testimony. In this way, not only was the wrath of the mighty (*potentium*) appeased, but even the long, wintry distress of the brethren in the palace alleviated, over and above [the effect of my] confession and suppliant penance, if it will have merited the forgiveness of sins, since, as it was said above, a humble satisfaction has merited from the beginning restoration rather than condemnation, not only among Christians, but also quite often among pagans. Indeed, this very subscription (*inscriptio*) of seizure, although coerced and involuntary (*coacta et non spontanea*), and therefore not canonical, but compliantly [made] by me myself, whom affliction oppressed under hostile foreign custody, was ascertained to have always been maintained and never violated. All the while, with the divine majesty as [my] witness, I was hoping for a man firmer and more useful than me in the same ecclesiastical duties to be [my] successor, since I feared that, whether by the enmity of the prince or the strong occurrence of [my] infirmity, it was not beneficial, but rather harmful, to my sons abiding there [in Reims]. Nevertheless, I was snatched away quite violently from them, and although I dutifully confessed, [it was] not by willing consent (*consensu sponte*), but rather by coercion (*coacte*), and thus I was not absolved canonically. Therefore, by dutiful repetition to the best of [their] ability [my sons] never desisted, until, entreating divine clemency by their constant prayers, they prevailed with utmost constancy in wishing for themselves the foolish care of my smallness.

In short, that true avowal (*professio*) of my intention amid afflictions (*in pressuris*) is pure and devout, which I now desire to be very widely known, not only by [my] three confessors, but by all of Christ's faithful, whose merits and prayers, furthermore, I by no means doubt have profited me in [my]

deserved troubles. I shall ever be mindful of the dangers of transgressions past, present, and future, visible and invisible, always having faith in God our Savior. But if the aforementioned treatise fashioned without a specific crime still causes anyone to stumble (*scandalizat*), let there be no doubt that in all my writings I never represent myself as righteous, but rather denounce [myself] everywhere to be an unworthy bishop and a sinner. Indeed – if it is right [to say] – the public, exacted declaration (*sententia*) of the venerable rite of ecclesiastical purification will be able to suffice for the man who is questioning [the treatise], if that initial decree (*definitio*) of the Lord in saying, *yea, yea, no, no*, does not suffice. [But] for the man with an unbelieving spirit, a dictum from God follows immediately after [this decree]: *That which is anything more, is of evil* (Matt. 5:37).

That preeminent palatial decree of revocation and restitution [by] so many bishops, [which has been] promulgated far and wide, is of assistance, I say, to all the faithful of the holy Church of God.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ God eternal. Lothar, by the ordination of divine providence, Emperor Augustus. Since the confession of sins is no less necessary in times of adversity than in times of prosperity, and God does not despise a contrite and humbled heart (cf. Vulg. Ps. 50:19), we do not doubt that it is likewise the joy of the angels in heaven over one sinner doing penance (cf. Luke 15:10). We by no means despise those mortals on earth, for whom we are not unaware that the angels in heaven rejoice, according to divine testimony. Divine kindness instructs us not to condemn those accusing or criticizing themselves over transgressions, but to restore them. The one, who not only rescued the prostitute from legal condemnation (cf. John 8:7), but also did not condemn the publican, humbled and accusing himself, but rather exalted him through an act of forgiveness, did not say: *Every one that humbleth himself shall be condemned, but exalted* (Luke 18:14). Therefore, the power which you, having been seized, lost on behalf of our cause, we restore [along with] the see and diocese of the city of Reims to you, Ebbo, by the bishops standing in unity and pronouncing a decision, and also by the constant faithful petitions of your church. [We do this] so that, clothed in the venerable pallium of the holy apostle's benevolence, you may oversee the concord and grace of the divine office with us, having been made worthy to receive it from our customary benevolence, with the completion of a humble satisfaction.

[I], Drogo, son of Charles, glorious Augustus, brother of Louis, [and] archbishop (*archipraesul*) of the palace of those most exalted Caesars and of the entire Holy Church, know that without a specific and manifest crime, no bishop should be deposed unless canonically summoned and publicly

convicted, and that without the agreement and the presence of his own church, and unless he has voluntarily (*sponte*) confessed, no bishop should be legitimately absolved [or] in any case be recalled canonically, as if [he were] a fugitive or one carried away by whatever means. For this reason, through the faithful of his own church faithfully making petition, [and] by the agreement of our prince
225 and the rest of the fellow bishops signing below, we, having received the divine pontifical license of binding and loosing from the authority of the Church, with the pallium of holy and apostolic authority, recall for his assistance with the divine offices [our] brother, the bishop of Reims, drawn away by worldly afflictions (*mundanis pressuris*) – [that man] who, by struggling with a like satisfaction and humbly seeking forgiveness, gave [up] the power of sacrificing for the sake of fraternal concord,
230 saying: *And then coming thou shalt offer thy gift* (Matt. 5:24). Archbishop Otgarius. Archbishop Amalvinus. Archbishop Heti. Archbishop Audax. Bishop Giselbertus. Bishop Haiminus. Bishop Frotharius. Bishop Ado. Bishop Samuhel. Presbyter Rataldus, called bishop. Bishop Joseph. Bishop Adalulfus. Bishop David. Bishop Hrodingus. Bishop Badaradus. Bishop Agano. Bishop Hartarius. Bishop Hrambertus. Amalricus, called bishop, along with the very many other priests and deacons
235 publicly attending. Enacted in the public palace of Ingelheim in the month of June, VIII. Kalends Jul., during the reign of Lord Lothar, Caesar, in the first year of his return, having been made successor in his native Francia, indiction III.

It is not unknown, but rather seems to be acknowledged by a great many, how this most
240 excellent church of the Gauls under the rule of the Franks has been troubled by disturbances and conflicts of the princes in these, our times, as a result of which even a great number of bishops wandered here and there, either driven out of their own sees or forsaking [them], whether by force or by fear. Among them was Ebbo, archbishop of the church of Reims, [who was] taken from his own see, brought into the presence of the princes, for some time held in exile, and then, having been
245 presented before the bishops, restored. In order that he might avoid the danger of his own impending damnation, assuage the turmoil of the princes, and, by redeeming the time (cf. Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), preserve himself for a better opportunity, he departed with the counsel of others in the sacerdotal ministry. [He did this], since, as he solemnly confessed, he might not be able to bear to both duly perform his ministry and endure the threats and conflicts of the princes. As the Lord
250 commands: *If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave thy offering*, and so forth (Matt. 5:23-24). Now, however, as it seems that God has restored peace to His Church, it pleases the princes and our episcopal teachers that the same pastor [Ebbo] may return to his own flock and take back into his care those whom he unwillingly abandoned. For this reason, I, Bishop Theudoricus, just as I previously lamented over his departure, so now do I

255 rejoice over his return, as we often read such things about others in ecclesiastical accounts (*gestis*).
Therefore, with respect to these arrangements which our brothers established, I sign below.
Hildemannus likewise thus assents to these matters. Ragenarius likewise. Fulcuinus likewise. Simeon
likewise. Rothadus likewise. Erpocius likewise. Lupus likewise. Emmo likewise.