150. April 4, 1711. From Bendicht Brechtbühl to Abraham Jacobs Fries at Amsterdam. He has received a letter from Runckel informing him that his request to return to Bern has been strictly refused, and for this reason he is abandoning the journey. Concerning Hans Bürki he can give no information. Recently Brechtbühl was called to Worms, where it was proposed to him and his fellow believers in the name of the Danish king to move to his kingdom. This he refused for the time being because he is unacquainted with that country. Another good possibility, the Palatinate, is overpopulated and the government must be asked for approval to settle there.

[recto]

Mannheim the 4th of April 1711.

Abraham Jacobs Fries

Much beloved friend and brother in Christ,

Abundant grace and peace be granted you from God, the Lord, as a cordial greeting.

Your welcome letters of February 3 and of March 27 I received yesterday with pleasure, since I have been waiting for that with longing. I perceived that the answer[[1]](#footnote-1) to my letter from January 4 does not suit me.

However, I can now also perceive that you have not forgotten me. With this I want to report to you that the day before yesterday a letter from Bern to Mannheim came from Mr. Runckel, from which I see that I, together with all of my household, having been evacuated, shall never have permission to come into the land again, forever and eternally. Wherefore I do not want to attempt it further, but rather commit my case to the dear God, who at the proper time can scatter all human plans and bring them to naught as is to be seen in the Book of Esther[[2]](#footnote-2) and in the Third Book of Maccabees,[[3]](#footnote-3) and other further sources.

I have also perceived the exceedingly great love, which you have demonstrated to the prisoners through Mr. Runckel. May the bountiful God Almighty[[4]](#footnote-4) be the bountiful rewarder of all the merciful. For my part I thank you all warmly for all the exertion and expense employed for us.

What the present condition of our people in Switzerland is, the friends know as well as I. What they determine to do, time will tell. The edict, which you have sent to Mr. d’Orville, has not yet come to my hand, but Mr. Runckel has sent a dozen copies to Mannheim, which I have indeed seen.

You would like to know where Hans Bürki is keeping himself. I cannot write that now, for since the time he left me, I only once have had a little hint of him, that one of our people saw him in a meeting in Switzerland.

Permission must be requested from the government as to whether some of the fellow believers coming here may reside in the Palatinate. But the land is swarming with inhabitants.

I was summoned about fourteen days[[5]](#footnote-5) [ago] to a gentleman in the city of Worms. He informed me that the King of Denmark also wanted some families for a province, whose name I cannot recall, only that it lies next to North Holland.[[6]](#footnote-6) He showed me on a map. They should enjoy great freedom, the only condition being that he desires industrious families. What sort of land it is the friends would have the best knowledge.

The Count of Hesse also is opening his land up to us. Although we are being driven out of our earthly fatherland, yet almighty God can create a dwelling for the believing children of Abraham[[7]](#footnote-7) and awaken the hearts and minds of kings and princes of other places to be favorable to us.

Closing for this time, once again with a cordial greeting together to all with whom I have become acquainted, and commending them favorably to the dear God, remaining a committed friend and brother of the friends,

Bendicht Brechtbühl

If the friends write to me, then make

the address to Hans Jacob Schnebely[[8]](#footnote-8)

and then on to me.

1. 150 In this letter (Document 108) Brechtbühl asked to be released from his promise not to return to Switzerland. This the Dutch Mennonites consistently refused. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Esther 3 and 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Third Book of Maccabees is found in the Froschauer Bible, but not in the Luther translation, nor the Authorized Version in English. In the Froschauer this is III Maccabees A, B, E, I, S and in the Cambridge Annotated Study Apocrypha III Macc. 1:8-29; 2:21-24; 4:1-10; 6:16-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Froschauer Bible, quoted here, has the expression “Gott Schadai,” whereas the Luther translation for Gen. 17:1 says, “der allmächtige Gott.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Brechtbühl is using here the Dutch word omtrent, which may not have been completely familiar to him. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. More exactly, North Holland probably means northern Netherlands. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Gal. 3: 7, 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Lowry, Documents of Brotherly Love, I, pp. 153 n. 1; 221 n. 2; 551; Guth, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)