**56. August 11, 1694.**  *Letter[[1]](#footnote-1) of King William III of England to his fellow ruler, Johann Wilhelm, the Elector Prince of the Palatinate.[[2]](#footnote-2) Hermannus Schijn, Dutch Mennonite minister and historian, in his* Modest Reply*[[3]](#footnote-3) explains that the King of England, who was of the Reformed persuasion, wrote this letter when a misunderstanding occurred in Jülich about the nonresistance of the Mennonites, opponents having stirred up a persecution against them.[[4]](#footnote-4) The King testified to their peaceful and industrious character. Schijn in his* History of the Mennonites[[5]](#footnote-5) *also uses this letter as a proof of Mennonite nonresistance.*

*The footnotes below reveal that this document has been of special interest to Mennonite historians over the years. Schijn uses it in two of his publications in the Netherlands in ca. 1710 and 1727 [1743]; Blaupot ten Cate uses it again in the Netherlands in 1839; Anna Brons quotes it in her early history of the Mennonites published in Germany in 1884; and N. B. Grubb translates it in Philadelphia in 1910.*

Copy in translation Of the letter written by his

Royal Majesty of Great

Britain to the Elector Prince of the Palatinate-  
 Neuburg.

My Brother,

The love which I bear towards all Christians and reports which have been brought to me of the abuses[[6]](#footnote-6) which certain Protestants called Mennonites have suffered in Your Highness’s country of Jülich oblige me, to intercede for them with you in the hope that you may consider it worthwhile to have complete and extensive information supplied to you of the cruel procedures which have been executed against them. I feel assured that you will be very much touched, in view of their innocence, and will issue orders to free them from the punishments with which they are threatened and to restore them to the full possession of their property and effects.

I have entered into the intercession more readily by the assurance, which has always been given to me by these people, of their submissive and peaceable spirit, who conduct themselves with absolute subjection and obedience towards those in authority, leading a peaceful and industrious life, and willingly paying the taxes to the state and country where they reside, and where they make themselves useful by their vitality and labor. Taking this into consideration, I have not been able to refuse to send this recommendation to you concerning their persons and affairs, assuring myself that you will consider them worthy of Your Highness’s protection and that they will be found worthy of it by the experiences of an inviolate faithfulness, which they owe to you. I shall always acknowledge the tokens of Your Highness’s kindness and gentleness on similar occasions when I may give evidence how much I am,

My Brother,

Your Highness’s affectionate brother,

William, King

in the camp at Mount St. André[[7]](#footnote-7)

the 11th of August 1694.

1. **56** 1 An English translation appears in the *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac for the Year of Our Lord 1910*, p. 22, (published at Philadelphia with N. B. Grubb as editor.) At the head of the English translation the following appears: “Translated from French into German.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. William III (1650-1702), also known as William of Orange, was the stadholder of the Netherlands who became King of Great Britain in 1689. *ME* IV, 957; III, 115, 127. *DB* (1895), pp. 5-6. Johann Wilhelm, a Catholic, was the Elector Prince of the Palatinate (1690-1716). *ME* IV, 110; *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, XV, 684; *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Chicago: William Benton, 1972), s.v. “Palatine.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For the *Modest Reply* (*Zedige Verantwoording*) see footnote on opposite page. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Brons, pp. 211-212. This incident occurred from July 16 to August 28, 1694. A description of the forcible evacuation of the Mennonites from Rheydt in “Gulich” is given in the *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac for the Year of Our Lord 1910*, pp. 17-22. See also *ME* IV, 316-317; III, 42, 127; S. Blaupot ten Cate, *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Friesland* (Leeuwarden: W. Eekhoff, 1839), pp. 197-198; Smith, pp. 34-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Schijn, *Geschiedenis*, I, pp. 337-339. The letter in this book is yet another version. Both of Schijn’s published versions differ in many details from the hand-written version and from each other, but without changing the general meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The *Zedige Verantwoording* says “of the mistreatment.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. or, “In the army at Mont St. Andre.” During the War of the Grand Alliance (1689-1697) against France, William was often in camp managing the conduct of the war. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Grand Alliance, War of the.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)