

unwise in having any religion. Listen well to this, my dear nephew: there is nothing that tyrannizes the mind and the heart more than religion, because it agrees neither with our passions, nor with those great political views which a monarch must have. The true religion of a prince consists in desiring the interests of men and his own glory because of his station; he must be dispensed from having any other; he must have maintained a respectable outward appearance in order to conform himself to those who notice and surround him. If he fears God, or, to speak as women and priests do, if he fears hell, as did Louis XIV in his old age, he becomes timid and worthy of being a Capuchin.

If we are desirous of entering into a treaty with other powers and we remember that we are Christians, we are undone, we are always duped. As regards war, it is a trade in which the least scrupulous would spoil everything. Indeed, what man of honor would ever wage war, if he had not the right to make those rules permitting of plunder, fire, and carnage?¹

A celebrated author has compared the military to bulldogs which it was necessary to chain up carefully, and who must not be loosed except when necessary. This comparison is carried too far, but, in spite of that fact, it will serve you not as a maxim, but as a warning. . . .

By its nature my kingdom is military, and, properly speaking, it is only by its help that you must hope to maintain and aggrandize yourself; it is necessary, therefore, that your mind should ever be fixed upon this. . . .²

A Prince who rules independently and has formed his own political system will never be placed in an embarrassing situation when a prompt decision must be made; for all his acts are directed to the finer object he has set unto himself. He must especially have acquired the greatest imaginable knowledge with regard to the details of army organization. Seated by the green table a man devises but unsatisfactory plans for military campaigns; and what can be the use of the finest plans for a campaign when they break down through the ignorance of those who are intrusted with their execution? The man who does not know the needs of an army, who does not concern himself with the innumerable details of its commissariat, who does not know how an army is mobilized, who does not understand the rules of the art of war and who does not

¹ *Les Matinées Royales*, pp. 6-7.

² Whittall, *Frederick the Great on Kingcraft* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901), pp. 97-98.

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³ Bolz, *4*
pp. 69-71.