

Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power

Rene Guenon



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The present work complements Guénon's East and West, The Crisis of the Modern World, and The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times, for whereas the latter detail the West's gradual movement away from traditional values, Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power focuses by contrast on what Guénon believed to be the normal relationship between the spiritual and the temporal implied in a healthy traditional civilization, that is, the supremacy of knowledge over action, of the sacerdotal over the royal caste. Touching first on India and the medieval West, Guénon then illustrates his point by citing quarrels over investiture and disputes of certain French kings with the papacy as evidence of a deviation in Christianity. In his preface Guénon refers to recent 'incidents' that had drawn attention to this general question, and although he says that his deliberations are not meant to deal directly with them, it may be of interest to note that the events concerned centered on a confrontation in 1926 between the political organization Action Française and Pope Pius XI.

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