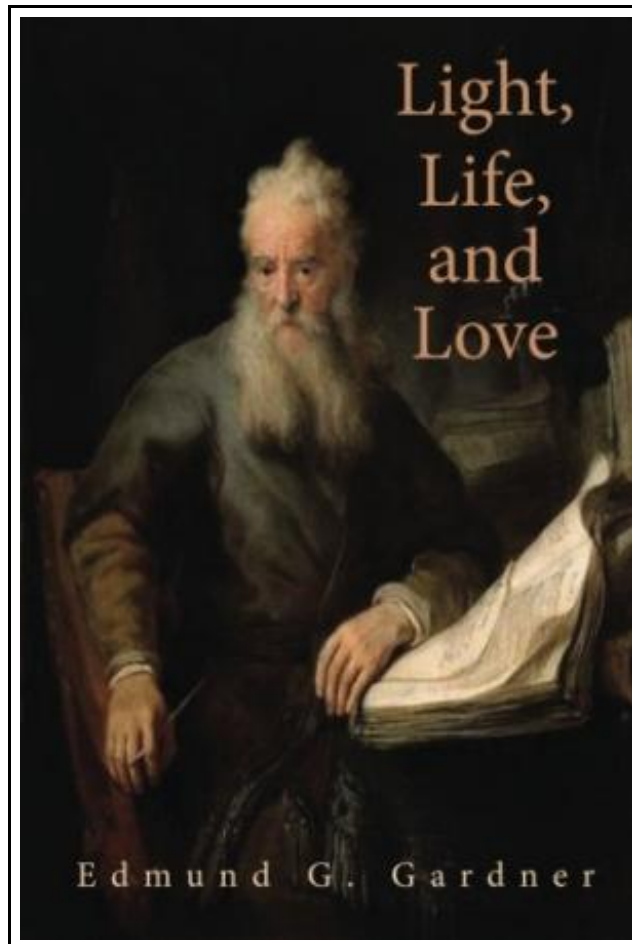


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Createspace, United States, 2015. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.TO most English readers the Imitation of Christ is the representative of mediaeval German mysticism. In reality, however, this beautiful little treatise belongs to a period when that movement had nearly spent itself. Thomas a Kempis, as Dr. Bigg has said, [1] was only a semi-mystic. He tones down the most characteristic doctrines of Eckhart, who is the great original thinker of the German mystical school, and seems in some ways to revert to an earlier type of devotional literature. The Imitation may perhaps be described as an idealised picture of monastic piety, drawn at a time when the life of the cloister no longer filled a place of unchallenged usefulness in the social order of Europe. To find German mysticism at its strongest we must go back a full hundred years, and to understand its growth we must retrace our steps as far as the great awakening of the thirteenth century-the age of chivalry in religion-the age of St. Louis, of Francis and Dominic, of Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas. It was a vast revival, bearing fruit in a new ardour of pity and charity, as well as in a healthy freedom of thought. The Church, in recognising the new charitable orders of Francis and Dominic, and the Christianised Aristotelianism of the schoolmen, retained the loyalty and profited by the zeal of the more sober reformers, but was unable to prevent the diffusion of an independent critical spirit, in part provoked and justified by real abuses. Discontent was aroused, not only by the worldiness of the hierarchy, whose greed and luxurious living were felt to be scandalous, but by the widespread economic distress which prevailed over Western Europe...

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