

A  
MAP OF LIFE

BY  
F. J. SHEED

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7
I. THE PROBLEM OF LIFE'S PURPOSE	10
II. THE PROBLEM OF LIFE'S LAWS	20
III. HEAVEN . . . . .	28
IV. THE CREATION AND FALL . . . . .	38
V. THE INCARNATION . . . . .	45
VI. THE MYSTICAL BODY . . . . .	58
VII. TRUTH: (A.) THE TEACHING CHURCH . . . . .	69
VIII. TRUTH: (B.) THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY . . . . .	77
IX. LAW AND SIN . . . . .	90
X. LAW AND SUFFERING . . . . .	100
XI. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE: (A.) HOW IT COMES TO THE SOUL . . . . .	106
XII. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE: (B.) HOW IT WORKS IN THE SOUL . . . . .	121
XIII. HELL . . . . .	132
XIV. PURGATORY: HEAVEN . . . . .	138
INDEX . . . . .	145

## INTRODUCTION

THE traveller through a strange country usually gets vivid impressions of individual things, but only a confused impression of the country in its totality. He remembers this mountain and that stream and the other village; but how one is related to the other, and the general winding of roads that he has barely glimpsed, cannot in the nature of things stand clear in his mind: and a map of the whole country seen at the end of his travels, may very well be full of surprises and is, in any case, a totally new view. In very much the same way a traveller through life gets vivid—sometimes extremely vivid—impressions of things near at hand: confused impressions of things seen at a distance or only heard of: but of the whole plan of life, no idea at all. In his mind will be a jumble of facts, tossed about in any order—God, sin, church-going, disease, sacraments, suffering, the treason of friends, hostilities, death and the fear of death, money and the loss of it, God-made-man—and so on without end. But which of these things are big things and which of them are little, he will not know with certainty: the things that have come nearest to himself will seem big things: the remoter things will seem small.

And of the relations of these things one to another—how one thing agrees with, or conflicts with, another—of all this, merely by dint of living, he will have only the most confused and uncertain impression. In fact it may easily happen that a man who merely lives, and neither reflects nor is taught, does not even suspect relationships, but thinks of all things as accidents with no reason in themselves save that they happened, and no connection with each other save that one came earlier and one came later. Because of this confusion, I propose to try to make what may roughly be called a map of life—a scale map in which the principal “natural features” will be shown in their right proportions and the roads between them drawn in. This map will *not* be of my own drawing, fruit of my own experience of life. Nor will it be of any man’s drawing. It will be a transcript of what God, the Author of life, has revealed as to the meaning of the whole and the relations of the parts.

Nor will it be a demonstration. Maps do not prove, but only state. There are only two reasons for trusting a map: one is the authority of the map-maker: the other is one’s own experience, when one has travelled the road with its guidance. The second is normally of less practical value. We need to be assured of a map’s trustworthiness at the beginning of a journey. A map, therefore, must be accepted or rejected according to the confidence the map-maker deserves. In this instance, fortunately,

## INTRODUCTION

the map-maker is God. In this effort to set out the plan of life, there will be no attempt anywhere to prove the truth of what is said, but only to state what, according to the Church He founded, God *has* said.