Overview

Clive Staples Lewis (1898–1963) was a brilliant scholar, acclaimed writer, literary critic, and Christian apologist. He is particularly honored for his contributions in literary criticism, apologetics, and children’s and fantasy literature.

Of his over thirty books and numerous essays (the majority of which have remained in print since his death), the most well-known are The Chronicles of Narnia, Mere Christianity, and The Screwtape Letters. The Chronicles of Narnia series is especially popular and has been adapted into several plays, radio productions, and feature films. Most recently Time magazine listed the first book in that series, The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, as one of the top 100 English language novels written between 1923 and 2005. Lewis’ works have been translated into over thirty languages and millions of copies have been sold worldwide.

Brief Biography: C.S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis was born November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. His only sibling was his older brother, Warren Hamilton Lewis (1895–1973), with whom he would remain very close throughout his life. Their mother died of cancer when Lewis was nine years old.

After receiving a scholarship to University College, Oxford University, England in 1916, Lewis soon suspended his studies in 1917 to enlist in the British Infantry during World War I. Wounded during the Battle of Arras, he was discharged at the end of 1919.

Soon after, Lewis resumed his studies in Oxford, later to become a Fellow and Tutor of English Literature at Magdalen College, Oxford. He served there from 1925 until 1954, when he was appointed Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

In 1930, Lewis and his brother, Warren, moved into what became Lewis’s lifelong home, “The Kilns,” located just outside Oxford.

In 1931, influenced by his close friendship with J.R.R. Tolkien and the writings of G.K. Chesterton, Lewis converted to Christianity and became a member of the Church of England. His conversion transformed his work and writings. During WWII, his BBC wartime radio broadcasts on Christianity explained the faith to many thousands and ultimately brought Lewis worldwide acclaim. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential Christian writers of the 20th century.

Throughout his years in Oxford, Lewis, Tolkien, and a small company of friends and fellow writers met frequently to share their creative works-in-progress. Members of this now famous writers group, the “Inklings,” came to produce some of the most beloved works of fiction and prose of the 20th century.

Late in his life, in 1956, Lewis married Joy Davidman Gresham, an American writer. After a four year fight with bone cancer, she died in 1960, after which Lewis continued to care for her two sons, Douglas and David Gresham. In his book, A Grief Observed, Lewis expressed his deep anguish over his wife’s death. The book, which would later inspire the award winning stage play and feature film, Shadowlands, has been a source of comfort to many experiencing grief.

One week before his 65th birthday, on Friday, November 22, 1963, Lewis died at The Kilns—the same day that President Kennedy was assassinated and Aldous Huxley died. He is buried a short walk from his beloved home in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church in Headington Quarry, Oxford.

The C.S. Lewis Foundation is a donor supported 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Inspired by the life and legacy of C.S. Lewis, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing the renewal of Christian thought and creative expression throughout the world of learning and the culture at large. For more information about the work and programs of the Foundation, contact:
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