

discoveries. At the age of 27 Newton was appointed Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. He became so absorbed by his subject that he often forgot about things such as meals. Many amusing stories suggest that he became very absent-minded and unpractical about every-day things. He once cut a hole in the door of the house to allow the cat to come in and out. When the cat had kittens he cut a number of smaller holes- one for each kitten!

Before he was thirty he was internationally celebrated for his experiments on light, but it was above all as a mathematician that Newton earned his unparalleled place in history. Once publication of a paper led to considerable controversy which lasted for many years. Newton was tired of them. "I was so persecuted", he writes, "with discussions arising out of my theory of light, that I blamed my own imprudence for parting with so substantial a blessing as my quiet, to run after my shadow".

During these years Newton's financial position was not particularly good, for he had been obliged to ask the Royal Society to excuse him the subscription of one shilling per week. In February 1675, he was admitted Fellow of the Society.

From 1692 to 1694 Newton's work was interrupted by an extremely serious illness, during which he suffered from insomnia and from a nervous disorder so severe that it was rumored, not only in England but in scientific circles abroad, that he had gone out of his mind and had been interned in a mental hospital.

Newton's great genius lay in his ability to take the discoveries and theories of other men and fit them into a single, logical pattern. He, however, recognized his indebtedness to other men. He once said, 'If I have seen farther than other men it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants'.

Early in 1727 Newton again fell seriously ill. His health had been failing for some time, and he died in Kensington on March 20, 1727. He was buried in Westminster Abbey on March 28, where a monument was erected to his memory in 1731.

A tribute to the memory of the world's greatest natural philosopher is the epitaph inscribed on a tablet in the room where Newton was born:

*Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night;  
God said: 'Let Newton be' and all was light.*