

planet; as well as the difficulties interposed in consequence of its remote distance from our earth, must necessarily render the absolute determination of all its peculiar phenomena a work of time. Meanwhile it may be permitted us to reason that, if Neptune is self-luminous, this condition may enable it, with its solitary satellite, to possess a sufficiency of light for the existence and enjoyment of life by creatures of a higher organization than some feel disposed to accord to it, should life indeed exist upon it at present.

With regard to the temperature of these remote bodies which must necessarily be dependent upon a variety of considerations, I cannot but think some allowance should be made for the greater amount of internal heat which may *possibly* be a condition of the superior planets; for if, as some are disposed to consider, the Solar System had a common origin, and the planets originally were in an incandescent state, then under such circumstances the larger bodies would take longer to cool down than the smaller ones—and if any degree of probability is to be attached to such speculations, our friends on the confines of the system, (if such there be) may still be warmer than we give them credit for.

I am not, however, going to inflict on the members of the Institute any dissertation on the plurality or non-plurality of worlds, which subject has assuredly been sufficiently discussed of late years, leaving us all much of the same opinion still, although some of us may have been convinced against our will. But if any feel disposed to view this vexed question under a new aspect, and see much that is valuable, original and interesting, presented in a very condensed form, I strongly recommend them to peruse a little work called “The Chemistry of the Stars,” written by Dr. George Wilson, the recently appointed Professor of Technology, at Edinburgh; and I think they will come to the conclusion, that it contains as much as need be said upon the subject to convince us all, that it is not probable there is any planet in the Solar System adapted for the residence of beings constituted *precisely* as we are.

I may add that when Neptune was discovered by Dr. Galle, it appeared as a star of the 8th magnitude; its apparent diameter is about 2".8 when in opposition, that of Uranus in the same position is about 4". If we had a first class telescope attached to this Institute, or to one of the Universities, we might have opportunities of satisfying ourselves by personal inspection of the comparative light given forth by these two planets. The acquisition of such an instrument is, I regret to say, still a consummation devoutly to be wished.