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PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY.

1938–1939.

Meeting of the Aristotelian Society at 55, Russell Square, London, W.C.1, on November 14th, 1938, at 8 p.m.

I.—PHENOMENALISM.

The Presidential Address.

By G. F. Stout.

In a very interesting paper recently read before this Society by Mr. Braithwaite the following passage occurs :—

> "I have no language to describe the sort of experiences which strongly falsify the conjunction of *p* (there is a clock on the mantelpiece now) with *q* (my present experience is reliable) except by saying that they are the sort of experiences which, if reliable, would refute there being a clock on the mantelpiece now."*

Assuming that the defining property of this class of experiences does not presuppose an understanding of "there is a clock on the mantelpiece now," or indeed any reference at all to material objects, Mr. Braithwaite proceeds to symbolise it as P. But he makes no attempt to indicate what P is. It has, according to him, to fulfil a certain function in his logical scheme. But he supplies no way of ascertaining what it is, and consequently no way of ascertaining how it plays the part he assigns to it. All that he tells us is that it is a property of a certain class of experiences which makes them capable of verifying or falsifying propositions about material things. Until I know what this property is I have no means of verifying this statement about it.

* *Propositions about Material Objects*, p. 286.

In answering the question what the property is, it is not enough to say that it is indefinable. I am not asking for a definition, but for an indication such as will enable me to discover it for myself in my own experience.

This is the course followed by Mr. Braithwaite in a case which he himself regards as analogous.

> " I know," he says, " what is meant by saying of an area in my visual field that it is ' pewter-coloured,' where the property of being pewter-coloured is a sensible or phenomenal property : yet I have no public language with which to communicate my proposition except by bringing in the colour of a material object, a piece of pewter."*

In this instance Mr. Braithwaite does for the colour quality what he fails to do for P. He indicates a way in which I can find out for myself what it is he refers to, if we are allowed the very probable assumption that neither he nor I are afflicted with a certain type of colour blindness. When he says that the area in his visual field is pewter-coloured, I take him to mean that it has the sort of colour-quality which is immediately experienced when a person of normal vision looks at a piece of pewter in a normal light. In order therefore to find out for myself what he intends to refer to, I have only to look at a piece of pewter.

It is my aim in this paper to point out by essentially the same method what character of sense-experience makes it capable of verifying or falsifying propositions about material objects. This is a far more complex and difficult problem. The only way of solving it is by referring to particular examples and by analysing and comparing these. Until we have thus discovered what P is we are not in a position to say whether or not it is indefinable, or to say whether or not it involves a reference to material objects.

Like Mr. Braithwaite I am especially concerned with propositions about material objects. But I must first consider propositions about what is immediately experienced

* *Ibid.*, pp. 285–6.

in the way of sensation and feeling. (I must do so because I shall have to examine the phenomenalist theory that all propositions about material objects can be translated into equivalent propositions about immediately experienced sense-contents and their relation to each other.) Take first the case in which I am actually experiencing a feeling or sense-content at the present moment. Then the feeling, *e.g.*, of pain, or the sensation, *e.g.*, of blue, itself strongly verifies the proposition asserting its occurrence, verifies it so as quite to exclude alternative possibilities. Alternative possibilities may be thought of, but they are not actually experienced. Take next the proposition that I shall actually experience the pain or the sense-content in the future. Here the pain or the sense-content are not actually experienced in the act of asserting the proposition. They are only thought of. They may be thought of by help of a present actual feeling, sensation or image, which is thought of as resembling them or otherwise related to them. But these present actual experiences are not what is thought of in asserting in words or believing without words that a certain feeling, or sense-content, will be actually experienced in the future. None the less such propositions are strongly verified if what is expected actually occurs within the time at which it was expected to occur. They are also capable of what Mr. Ayer calls weak verification by experiences which add to their probability. It should be noted that verification which is weak in Mr. Ayer's sense may be very strong indeed according to the ordinary use of language. It would, I suggest, be more convenient to mark the distinction by using other terms. We might, for instance, contrast absolute with relative, complete with incomplete, or final with progressive verification. In any case the difference is one of kind rather than degree. Propositions asserting the future occurrence of feelings or sensations are strongly verified by the actual occurrence of these same feelings or sensations as they were expected to occur. They are weakly verified if their probability is increased by other experiences than those to which they refer. In general we may say that when a proposition is verified by different experiences

corroborating each other, the verification is weak or, as I should prefer to say, progressive.

I now turn to a very important class of propositions, those which depend on remembrance of past sensations and feelings. In remembering a past sense-content, I think of it but I do not actually experience it. I may be actually experiencing a memory-image more or less resembling it, but this image is not what I remember. Propositions asserting the occurrence of a past sensation cannot, therefore, so far as they depend on remembrance, be strongly verified in the same way as those which assert the occurrence of an actually present sensation. Neither can we gain an actual experience of it by actually travelling back into the past. There is no road that way. Such memory-propositions or beliefs cannot therefore be strongly verified. They can, of course, be weakly verified. But they cannot be so verified independently of propositions which themselves depend on remembrance. It would seem therefore that memory-propositions, whether expressed in language or not, must have an intrinsic probability of their own which is independent of their verification by other experiences. In fact this is the assumption on which we all proceed and cannot help proceeding. The mere fact that we remember or seem to remember having had a certain sensation in the past constitutes *ceteris paribus* an initial probability that the sensation actually has been experienced in the past. The degree of probability varies in different cases. It may be very slight, or it may be for practical purposes indistinguishable from certainty.

It follows from what I have said that remembering the past occurrence of a feeling or sense-content is a complex fact involving three indispensable factors, each unique and indefinable. (1) An actual experience present in the moment of remembering. This frequently consists, in part at least, of what is called a memory-image. But I should also include under this head present experiences too indefinite to be properly called images. (2) The thought of the past occurrence of a sensation or feeling. (3) A unique and indefinable relation between the present actual experience and

the thought of the past occurrence. The three factors all enter indispensably into the process of remembering. But they are not normally distinguished from each other. They are different but not discriminated. They are no more discriminated than the factors which enter into inductive inference, whatsoever these may be, are discriminated when we infer that bread will nourish us or a flame burn us. The relevant distinctions emerge only on reflective analysis. Otherwise they remain subconscious.

This analysis of remembrance is important for the purpose of the present paper because, as I shall try to show, it applies also, *mutatis mutandis*, to the sense-perception through which we are primarily cognisant of material objects. In sense-perception, as in remembrance, something seems to exist actually which may or may not be what it seems to be. Further, this seeming has an intrinsic probability, small or great, which makes it capable of being (weakly) verified or falsified by other perceptual experiences in the inductive process through which common sense and science come to know the material world in detail. This perceptual seeming is, I submit, just what Mr. Braithwaite symbolises by P.

Before passing to my main thesis I have yet to prepare the way for it by examining another class of propositions about immediate sense-experience. I refer to those which assert that an experiencing individual, on the fulfilment of certain conditions, will have, would be having, or would have had certain sensations. If my hand were now in contact with that table I should be actually experiencing certain tactual sensations ; I shall experience such sensations if I lay my hand on the table after the lapse of five minutes from the present time ; I should have had a similar experience if I had placed my hand on the table five minutes ago. In all these examples the hypothetical conditions of realising possible sensations are physical ; they consist in variable relations between two material objects—my body and the table. The same holds good, so far as I can discover, for possible sensation in general. Excluding physical conditions, I can find no warrant whatever for

believing that if I experience certain sensations I shall also experience certain other sensations. I have, for instance, no ground for believing that if I experience a train of sensations such as normally accompany a certain movement of my arm, this will be followed by the sort of sensation which is normally experienced when my hand is in contact with a table. I have no reason to assert this unless I assume, as a physical fact, that my arm really moves and my hand really comes in contact with the table. Similarly I have no ground for asserting that the series of sense-impressions which I experience in following with my eye the motion of one billiard ball until it impinges on another, will be followed by the sensations which would occur if I saw the second ball moving. To satisfy the required conditions it must be assumed that the first ball, as a material object, does really move and really impinge on the second ball. Hume would say that our expectation of the sequence of the second set of sensations on the first is generated, if not justified, by analogous occurrences in our previous experience, in other words, that it depends on a previous inductive process. I reply that there are no propositions which could serve as the premises of such an inductive process except such as not only refer to, but assert or assume material objects and occurrences.

At this point I come into collision with the so-called phenomenalist theory of matter. The phenomenalist might agree to all I have so far said. But he would urge that I have not pushed my analysis far enough. I have not defined what I mean when I speak of a material object. He is ready to supply this deficiency. According to him all propositions concerning the existence, persistence, qualities and behaviour of material objects can be translated into equivalent propositions about sensations actual and possible in their relation to each other. If there are any which cannot be so translated, he holds that they must be unverifiable and that they are therefore only pseudo-propositions, *i.e.*, nonsense. In the process of translation he does not and cannot confine himself only to actual sensations past, present and future. On the contrary, only a relatively

very small part of matter as he defines it consists of actually experienced sense-contents. His scheme would break down altogether without the conception of possible sensations which would be actualised if certain conditions were fulfilled. He admits that if he is to avoid a vicious circle these conditions must be assignable in terms which do not assert or assume material objects, but only sensations. They must take the form : If I had experienced, were experiencing, or shall experience certain sensations, I should have experienced, would be experiencing, shall experience certain others. However difficult it may be to reduce to this form all or indeed any propositions about possible sense-contents, the phenomenalist holds and is bound to hold that in principle it can be done. Otherwise such propositions are unverifiable, whence it follows that since they are not tautologous they must be nonsense.

There are many ways of showing that phenomenalism is untenable. But there is only one which not only refutes it but also brings to light the nature of the fallacy that underlies it. I accordingly begin with this line of argument, which so far as I know has not been explicitly stated before. It starts from the admitted fact that we are primarily cognisant of material objects only in sense-perception and that all propositions about them are verifiable directly or indirectly only through observation and experiment. This is common ground to the phenomenalist and to me. Starting from this common ground, I inquire what it is that we perceive when we perceive something as a material object. This question is one of fact and cannot, I submit, be answered on *a priori* grounds. It can only be answered by an analysis of the process of sense-perception as it actually occurs in particular instances. The phenomenalist has a view of his own of what constitutes the perceived object. But this view seems to be based not on examination of the relevant facts but on the exigencies of his own theory. He then uses it in order to establish the very theory from which it is derived.

According to the phenomenalist, what is perceived as a material object, so far at least as the perception is verifiable,

consists of two parts. (1) Certain sensations actually experienced by the percipient; (2) certain possibilities of sensation which, as such, cannot be actually experienced; these possibilities are apprehended as dependent on the realisation of certain possible conditions, and the conditions themselves, if and when they are realised, must consist in actual sensations and in nothing else. Now I am prepared to maintain (1) that the actual sensations of the percipient are on reflective analysis distinguishable from what he perceives as a material object and (2) that what he is cognisant of but does not actually experience never consists merely in possibilities.

I have now to explain and justify these statements by analysis of sense-perception as it actually occurs and yields the data of inductive inference. The critical point of this analysis is the distinction which I find between sensible appearance and perceptual seeming. I can point out what this distinction is only by examining particular cases of it. Consider what takes place when I perceive a piece of paper as reddish yellow. I actually experience a sense-content of a certain colour-quality. This colour-quality as actually experienced must actually exist. The proposition asserting its existence is strongly verified in the moment of perception. A colour-blind person of the red-green type would have a sensation of a different colour quality. In his case too the colour-quality, being actually experienced, actually exists. The proposition asserting its existence is for him also strongly verifiable. But the fact that he and I have sensations of different colour-quality in looking at the paper involves no contradiction. The two experiences neither verify nor falsify each other either strongly or weakly. But not only do the colour-blind person and myself have colour sensations different for each of us; the paper itself seems to each of us to be of the same colour-quality as that which we sensibly experience. This is what I call perceptual seeming. What thus seems to belong to the constitution of the material object is no mere possibility of sensation, or any other kind of possibility. On the contrary, it seems to the percipient in the act of perceiving

to be a quality as actual as that which he sensibly experiences.

The sensible appearance is an actual sensation. But it is more than this. It is the appearance of something other than itself—the material object. By this I mean that it is a primary and essentially important factor in determining perceptual seeming. It is far from being the only condition on which perceptual seeming depends. But in the absence of counteracting conditions the material object seems to be of the same nature as the sensible experience, which for that reason I call its sensible appearance. No other factor determines perceptual seeming in this way. A who is colour-blind and B who has normal vision ascribe or tend to ascribe to the material object a colour of the same nature as that which they sensibly experience. I express this by saying that for each of them the sensibly experienced colour is the sensible appearance of the objective colour. The difference of their colour-sensations involves no contradiction. It is otherwise with the consequent difference in the seeming colour of the object seen. If to A a piece of paper seems to have a certain colour and to B it seems to have a different colour, then, so far as they disagree, the question arises which of them is right, or more nearly right than the other. There are inductive tests which justify us in deciding in favour of normal eyesight as more nearly correct. The colour-blind person fails to distinguish colours which seem different to normal vision and consequently makes mistakes recognisable by their perceptible practical result, as when he confuses one colour signal with another. The ultimate appeal is still to sense-perception as yielding probable data capable of (weakly) verifying or falsifying each other in an inductive process.

In the case of the secondary qualities, the results obtainable in this way are far from precise. Take another illustration involving the primary qualities. What is our perceptual experience when we go to the pictures and see, let us say, a Mickey Mouse film? There is a complex series of changing shapes and motions which is actually occurring within the field of visual sensation. But there is also some-

thing else which for sense-perception seems actually to exist, though it does not actually exist. There seems to be an objective train of changing shapes and motions corresponding to what we sensibly experience. If we depended only on the evidence of present perception we should believe that what thus seems to occur really is occurring. A child unprepared for the illusion would in fact be so deceived. But we have other grounds for disbelief. We are aware all the time that we are only looking at a film picture. The present perceptual seeming is falsified by other perceptual seemings, including those on which the relevant scientific theory is based.

In order to bring out my point, I have laid stress on perceptions which are generally recognised as illusions. It may be said that such cases are exceptional and that I ought to have considered first the ordinary perceptions on which we can safely rely in daily life. I reply, in the first place, that the analysis which holds for illusion must hold also for sense-perception in general. The point is that it is of such a nature as to be capable of being illusory. In the second place, the difference between illusory and correct perception is only one of degree. Ordinary perceptions are in general sufficiently correct for the purposes of our daily life, so that they do not as a rule lead to serious practical errors. But they are never quite accurate. A line, for instance, which seems straight to ordinary vision is really crooked. The microscope shows it to be so.

What constitutes perceptual seeming is that in the process of perceiving something seems actually to exist which may or may not really exist, and which may not even be believed to exist. The sensible appearance, on the contrary, is not anything which can merely seem to exist. It is a condition which determines the perceptual seeming. But it is not the only condition. On the contrary, the validity of the distinction is shown by the fact that the sensible appearance may be absent though the perceptual seeming is present, and also that when both are present they may vary independently of each other. We are constantly perceiving one thing as behind another, although it is so hidden that there

is no sensible appearance of it. When I see a book as lying on a table, the top of the table seems to stretch under the book, and the underside of the book to be in contact with the table. I am aware of this in the process of seeing, and not through a reflective judgment about what I see. As Koffka puts it, "The book on the table does not destroy the unity of the top of the table, which is clearly behind it."* Yet there is no sensible appearance either of the top of the table where the book hides it or of the under-surface of the book. There is only perceptual seeming. I explain in the same way the perception of things as having insides, at least when they are not transparent. When, for instance, I see a billiard ball or clasp it in my hands, there is a sensible appearance of its surface or part of its surface. But there is none of its inside. If I try to picture mentally what is inside it I get only images of surfaces. If the ball is broken up into small fragments, it is still only the surfaces of these fragments which sensibly appear. In this case there is not a permanent possibility but a permanent impossibility of sensation. My next example takes me on to debatable ground. It concerns visual perception of distance. Berkeley held that, properly speaking, there is no such perception. In this he is clearly wrong. When I see the ground stretching out before me, or the surface of a table intervening between its near and its far end, I certainly perceive distance and there is certainly a sensible appearance of distance. It is also true that in looking at the wall opposite me I perceive it as at a distance from my eye. But in this case it may well be doubted whether there is any sensible appearance of distance. I need not discuss the general question. It is enough to point out that under certain conditions of very common occurrence there is no sensible appearance of distance and yet distance is perceived. If I hold up my hand between me and the wall with the fingers spread so that I can see between them, I perceive the wall as distant from the fingers. But there is no sensible appearance of distance

* *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, p. 178.

intervening between the sensible appearance of the fingers and that of the wall. The same holds whenever an object is interposed between our eyes and a distant object so that we look past the edge of it. In all such cases—and they are constantly occurring—there is perceptual seeming without sensible appearance. I may add that the special condition of seeing past the edge of a screen does not, so far as I can discover, make any essential difference to the perception of things as distant from the eye. I should say that whether this condition is present or not, there is no sensible stretch between eye and thing seen. There is only perceptual seeming. But for my present purpose I need not discuss the point.

Perceptual seeming and sensible appearance, when both are present, may and do vary independently of each other. It has long been a vexed question how it is that the sizes and shapes of things seen differ greatly from the sizes and shapes of the corresponding retinal images. The gestalt psychologists answer quite rightly that we see with our brains, not merely with our eyes. But they assume that the difference to be accounted for is only a difference between the retinal image and the sensible appearance. I hold this view to be quite incompatible with the facts. The difference is very largely between sensible appearance and perceptual seeming. The sensible appearance corresponds much more closely to the retinal image. The retinal image decreases very much in size the further the thing seen is from the eye. Yet within certain limits of distance objects seem to be the size they really are. Is this due to an increase in the size of the sensible appearance proportional to the distance of the thing? So far as I can see, there is no increase in the size of the actually experienced sense-contents sufficient to account for the fact. I do not want to repeat what I have said on this subject elsewhere.† I shall here refer only to one simple illustration. When I look through a window-pane at the opposite side of the

† In a "Supplementary Note on Gestalt Psychology" at the end of the last (fifth) edition of my *Manual of Psychology*.

street, then, apart from any reflective judgment, the house opposite looks under ordinary conditions as big as it really is, and very much bigger than the window-pane. Yet the sensible appearance is virtually identical in size for both. If I continue to attend to the sensible appearance, this unusual direction of attention frequently has a curious result. The house opposite comes to seem no bigger than the pane. It does so without any discernible change in the size of the sensible appearance. But at the same time the house ceases to look the size it really is, as it does in ordinary vision. In ordinary vision we do not discriminate between sensible appearance and perceptual seeming. No more than in remembering we discriminate between the present memory-image and the experience which has occurred or seems to have occurred in the past. The difference exists and is operative, but the distinction is drawn only in reflective analysis.

I add a last example of fundamental importance. We perceive the extension, size and shape of material objects both by sight and touch. This objective extension seems to be actual and not any kind of possibility. It also seems to be numerically the same whether we see it or touch it. But there are two different sensible extensions. The field of colour and light sensation is quite distinct from the field of tactual sensation. The two may be correlated and vary concomitantly in certain regular ways, but they are not identical. If the object of sense-perception consisted in sense-contents actual and possible, every material object would seem to have two sizes and two shapes, one visible and the other tangible. But in fact there seems to be only one actual physical extension. In verifying sight by touch or inversely we assume that this is so. For me, of course, this state of things presents no difficulty. The two sensible extensions are two sensible appearances of what seems to the percipient to be one and the same objective extension.

Let us now compare this account of perceptual experience with that given by the phenomenalist. He starts from the assumption, which he seems to regard as evident *a priori*, that originally the percipient is cognisant only of his own

sensations as they actually occur. But some of these sensations recur frequently in more or less regular conjunction with each other. As a consequence the percipient, when certain sensations are present, expects others which are not yet actually experienced. Coincidentally, or as a further development, he comes to believe in certain general relations such as, expressed in language, would take the form of conditional propositions. If certain sensations had been, were being, or will be experienced, then certain others would have been, would be, or will be experienced. Such possibilities of sensation are all, besides his actual sensations, that the percipient is or can be aware of in perceiving material objects. If he supposes, as in fact he does suppose, that he is aware of more than that, he is indulging in a most primitive metaphysics, *i.e.*, in nonsense. Now in one essential point this phenomenalist theory agrees with my own. According to it, whatever may have been originally the case, our present normal perceptions include more than actually experienced sense-contents. They include the thought of future and possible sensations. For future and possible sensations cannot as such be actually experienced. They can only be thought of and believed or disbelieved in. But I cannot find that what is thus thought of ever consists merely in such possibilities. As I have tried to show, we perceive material objects as having *actual* characters and modes of behaviour. Further, as I shall presently urge, these actual characters and modes of behaviour constitute the only definitely assignable conditions on which possibilities of sensation depend. But before passing to this topic, I have first to inquire why it is that the phenomenalist assumes as self-evident that originally the percipient can perceive only what he actually experiences. I suggest that he is misled by linguistic usage. We are in the habit of distinguishing thought as a process separate from sense-perception and occurring at a higher level of mental development. From this point of view we do not even raise the question whether the distinction is absolute or only relative. On the contrary, we tend to regard sense-perception as excluding thought and thought

as excluding sense-perception. Hence arises an unjustifiable interpretation of the proposition that our knowledge of the material world is derived from and founded on experience. The experience is identified with sense-perception, and this is taken to exclude any element of thought. In other words, it is taken to consist in acquaintance with actual sensations. Now I do not deny the abstract possibility that an individual may be cognisant only of his own actual sensations. What I do deny is that such sensations can supply the ultimate data of the inductive process through which our knowledge of the material world has in fact developed. For this what I have defined as perceptual seemings are indispensable. For these alone weakly verify and falsify each other in the way required. They alone have Braithwaite's property P. I conclude that the experience from which our knowledge is derived is not pure experience, but experience which includes thought—as the whisky we drink includes water.

This analysis of the experience on which our knowledge of the material world is founded is fatal to phenomenalism. The phenomenalist position is that all propositions about material objects are in principle capable of being translated into propositions about actual and possible sensations. Now we do not translate from one language into another, if and so far as we are driven to use in our translation words belonging to the language we profess to translate. But in fact the phenomenalist cannot get on at all without constantly referring to material objects. As Mr. Braithwaite says: "... it is impossible to state the conditions under which a person will have a sense-datum of a clock on the mantelpiece without specifying a lot of things about the position of the person's body, the integrity of his nervous system"* and so forth. Now, I do not say that this difficulty, so far as I have yet stated it, is sufficient to upset phenomenalism. For it may be urged that material objects are mentioned only in order to indicate what sensations are referred to, as, for instance, Mr. Braithwaite indicates the

* *Propositions about Material Objects*, p. 275.

quality of a certain part of his visual field by saying that it is pewter-coloured. But this explanation misses the essential point at issue. This is that material objects are introduced as conditions on which the occurrence of actual sensations depend. I may have no means of indicating a certain train of sensations except by saying they are sensations which would accompany a certain movement of my arm. I may also indicate another sensation by saying that it is that which follows contact of my hand with the table. But the first sense-experience is not by itself the condition on which the second depends. This must include my body and the movement of my arm in relation to the table as part of my physical environment. What is true in this instance is true in all cases in which we attempt to specify the conditions of actual or possible sensations. These always involve physical factors which have not themselves been analysed into sensations actual and possible. Thus the case for phenomenalism entirely breaks down. In the only way in which it might be verified, verification is entirely absent. Contrast the position of those who maintain the so-called mechanical theory of life. The mechanist really has a case, whether it is convincing or not. In a large and increasing number of instances he succeeds in showing that vital processes are in fact mechanical, physical and chemical processes. There is still always an unexplored remainder which he has not yet explained in this way. But he may fairly urge that the partial nature of his success is due to the immense complexity of the problem. He is thus entitled to regard the mechanical view as a legitimate and fruitful hypothesis which can only be refuted by discovering facts positively incompatible with it. The phenomenalist, on the contrary, is unable to produce a single instance in which he has succeeded in showing that a physical fact consists merely in actual and possible sensations.

It does not follow that his hypothesis is nonsense. For there is a way in which it could be verified if it were true. But there is another consideration which seems to me to make utter nonsense of it. It commits the absurdity of making actual occurrences dependent not on other actual

occurrences but on mere possibilities. The sensations which occur when I move my arm depend on the anatomical and physiological constitution of my body. But the anatomical and physiological constitution of my body consists, according to phenomenalism, in a vast system of possibilities, none of which need be actualised when I experience the sensations connected with the movement of my arm. The same holds good for all sensations ; all of them depend on an immense complex of physical conditions in the body and its environment which, if the phenomenalist is right, are nothing actual, but mere possibilities. I felt this difficulty keenly when, very long ago, I first read Mill's chapter on a " Psychological Theory of External Objects," in his *Examination of Hamilton*. I was staggered by the way in which he talks of his Permanent Possibilities of Sensation as enduring, changing, and operating on one another just as if they were actual existences. His successors avoid such language. But in so doing they evade a real difficulty which Mill makes no attempt to disguise. In this respect Berkeley was better off than Mill. For he could always fall back on God as the one actual condition on which all sensations, actual and possible, ultimately depend. The weakness of his position is that his conception of God is too vague and general. It does not yield what is required—a detailed system of actual specific conditions of correspondingly specific possibilities of sensation.

To sum up, I urge three points against phenomenalism. (1) The evidence of sense-perception flatly contradicts it. (2) It is unverifiable in the only way in which it could be verified if it were true. (3) It commits the absurdity of making what is actual depend on what is possible instead of making what is possible depend on what is actual.

I hope that no one will say that in this paper I have been confusing a question of definition with one of fact. It is open to Mr. Ayer or to anyone else to determine what they intend to refer to both in their own thinking and in communication with others, when they use the term *material object*. Provided that their definition is self-consistent, it is not false, though it may be very inconvenient. So far the

only question of fact which arises is settled by their own arbitrary decision. It is otherwise when we inquire whether what they define as a material object is the same as what common sense and science regard as such. In particular, is it what we believe in on the testimony of our senses and of the inductive process which is ultimately founded on the data of sense-perception as (weakly) verifying and falsifying each other? This is a question of fact and the phenomenalist answer is not tautologous but false. I agree with Dr. Johnson that we find the refutation of phenomenalism when we consider what we are aware of in the act of kicking a stone.

Meeting of the Aristotelian Society, 55, Russell Square, London, W.C.1, on November 28th, 1938, at 8 p.m.

II.—THE NOTION OF ESTATIFICATION.*

By JUDGE H. C. DOWDALL.

1. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines Estatification as "The integration of separate property interests into a common estate"; and quotes the following passages :— "It would solve many difficulties of legal theory if in some circumstances thought were directed more to the estatification of interests and less to the incorporation of persons than has hitherto been done." "When you and I, unknown to one another, each invest £100 in the G.W.R., we do not incorporate ourselves into a mystical body, either real or fictitious, but we estatify our interests in our £100 in the estate of the G.W.R., in which we then have an interest; and when I incorporate my private business I do not become a kind of Sally Beauchamp with a double personality, but I estatify my business in a separate estate distinct from the rest of my property, though each may be managed by me. So, too, when I take a house, No. 23 High Street, I do not really become incorporated with the gentleman who lives at No. 25; it is only our interests as householders that are identified. So, too, with all trust estates, clubs, trade unions, friendly societies, &c. Of course when a number of people estatify interests, they must have a scheme in order to provide for the management of the corporate estate; and there must be a scheme determining the interest of each in the estate." These quotations, which are the earliest given, are dated 1921 and 1926, and indicate the legal origin of the word. But the notion of estatification has a much wider

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* This paper follows on two previously read before the Aristotelian Society in 1924 and 1935 *What is a Society?* Proc. XXV, p. 19, and *Corporate Personality psychologically regarded as a System of Interests.* XXXVI, p. 19.