

### *On God as an Actual Entity*

Perhaps the most telling reason against the supposition that God is *an* actual entity is that, if God were, the contradictions expressed by such phrases as "primordial, nontemporal accident," or "the non-temporal act of all-inclusive unfettered valuation [which is] at once a creature of creativity and a condition of creativity" would be unresolvable. The only reason such phrases are not outright contradictions is that one can distinguish between the abstract essence/existence of God, on the one hand, and the concrete actual state(s) of God, on the other. But if God were a single actual entity, which as such becomes (and perishes?!) but does not change, the distinction between essence/existence and actual state(s) would break down, or be nonexistent, whence the unresolvable contradictions. To speak of "a thing which combines the actuality of what is temporal with the timelessness of what is potential" (*PR* Key: 25) is, on the face of it, to utter a contradiction if "*a* thing" is taken strictly.

Also, Whitehead is explicit in saying that for some purposes "a nexus of many actualities can be treated as though it were one actuality. This is what we habitually do in the case of the span of life of a molecule, or of a piece of rock, or of a human body" (*PR*: 439). Why couldn't one say, then, that God is yet another case that can be treated in this way?

21 April 1977; rev. 20 March 1994