

## *On God's Work*

God's work is twofold, consisting in both a creative and a consummative aspect, as explained in *Faith and Freedom* (where, however, the operative distinction is not between "creative" and "consummative," but rather "emancipative" and "redemptive"). We human beings are given and called—implicitly, if not also explicitly and decisively—to participate in this work in both of its aspects, notwithstanding the important difference between them and, correspondingly, between our ways of participating in them.

Because consummation is God's work alone, being one and the same with God's own act of self-creation in response to the self-creative acts of God's creatures, we can participate in it only by bearing witness to it, explicitly and/or implicitly. On the other hand, creation cannot be God's work alone, because all creation, the creatures' as well as God's is and must be, in part, *self-creation*. God creates creatures that create themselves and one another and, in turn, contribute toward creating God, not, of course, in God's essential aspect, but only in God's accidental aspect. But just as God finally creates Godself alone (that being identical with God's consummation of God's creatures), so God's creatures must all, in part, finally create themselves alone. Except for God, and for God's unique creative action in making each creature really possible, no creature would or even could be at all. In this sense, God's unique creative activity is the necessary condition of the possibility of every creature's existence. And yet each creature also has an irreplaceable part to play in its own creation, and so not even God can be the sufficient as well as the necessary condition of the actuality, as distinct from the real possibility, of any creature's existence.

Insofar, however, as a creature acts conformally to God's will for it and, through it, for others, its self-creative activity implements, executes, carries out God's own purpose, and so its work is, in this sense, God's own work. In a broad sense, then, God's work includes not only God's own creative and consummative activity but also all the creaturely activity that so participates in it as to be conformed to it.

