

Józef Majka

The Opening of Man by Freedom and Love

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JÓZEF MAJKA, WROCŁAW

THE OPENING OF MAN BY FREEDOM AND LOVE

At the basis of every moral reflection we find the idea of transcendency of the human person¹. It can be understood in different ways because of its various aspects. It has also many names in current language but they always show only various aspects of the same reality which has its basis in the ontological structure of man. So, we speak about — personal transcendency — which means that every man, every human person, and not mankind as a whole, is its subject. We mean moral transcendency — referring to the activity of man, and to the ways and objects of this activity, contrary to the ontological transcendency — which refers to the existential structure, although the first has its basis in the second one.

The source of man's moral transcendency is his sensibility in the broad sense of the word, that is — not as the ability of reasoning — but as a dynamic participation in the transcendental values which evolves a certain ability of subjective growth by means of an integral participation in them. Man takes the entire reality in the categories of these values (truth, goodness and beauty) and that gives him an independence in relation to particular values, it makes him free.

The moral transcendency of man manifests itself first of all as a subjective autonomy in relation to the integral reality (except for transcendental values), as a special kind of sovereignty. In the light of these values and in a real attitude to them man reflects not only the integral reality which surrounds him, but also himself as a subject apart of that reality. This reflection leads him to the statement of distance of his personality in relation to the surrounding world, of his distinction and advancement in relation to it. It is visible in the treatment of the material world as a thing, and in a fixed consciousness in relation: person — thing.

This reflection also reveals his dynamic attitude towards transcendental values. The dynamism comes out in two ways: first — it is the ability to aim towards these values, a trend towards them, a certain openness in relation to them. On the other hand it is the fact of personal fulfilment thanks to the participation in them.

¹ K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn (Person and act)*, Kraków 1969, p. 107.

In other terms — man lives through his personality as a distinction in relation to things, as an elevation, in regard to them, to their treatment as subjects and means that lead to the goal, and as a raising to transcendental values, to the participation in them, and as a tendency towards their fullness. Both statements become obligatory for us and are the essence of what we call the personal dignity of man. This dignity may be reflected as something objective, or it can be experienced subjectively, as the direct basis and source of moral obligation².

1. The Personal Dignity of Man and the Moral Order

The personal dignity of man — independent of whatever its particular, current and subjective motivations — contains in itself a reference to transcendental values (The supreme Good, Truth and Beauty), because the fact itself of being open to this value is the reason of absoluteness of these tendencies and it directs man to the Absolute. Hence the moral transcendency of man is evident also, or first of all, in man's attitude towards the Absolute, who is the aim of his endeavours, and also the final criterium of his behaviour, the norm of his proceeding. Man does not only transcend (*transcendo*) the surrounding world of things, but he also tends to transcend himself, and to pass continually into a new state of participation in the transcendental values, of participation in the entity (being). Thus we say that man reaches gradually greater perfection, that means, new states or forms of participation in the Good, Truth and Beauty, or in fact, — in each of these values, because one cannot participate in one without a certain participation in the others.

Thus man tends towards his perfection and to the Good, as to the final aim of his proceedings, and as all the other proceedings are in consequence adjusted to this Good, therefore It becomes the supreme measure and criterion of his estimate. The Supreme Good that integrates all the values becomes for man the highest and ultimate example, according to which he completes, forms and perfects himself as a person; he is the prototype of personal perfection. So, man tends to achieve the likeness of the Supreme Good, of the Absolute, and this is a further aspect of his personal dignity; He finds in himself the likeness to God and he endeavours to complete His image in himself.

So, the essential feature of each person is one's opening to the outside: the opening to things and to persons. The opening of one person to the others consists in giving oneself to others, while the

² A. Rodziński, *U podstaw kultury moralnej* (At the basis of moral culture), *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 16 (1968) f. 2, p. 43.

opening to things consists in a certain form of getting control over them, in a not only intentional but also a real inclusion of them into the tendencies of a person, and a subordination to her (his) aims.

At present we are interested in the problem of openness of one person to another: man as a person is not only open to other persons and gives himself to others, but God also gives himself to man and addresses to him his loving, liberating and forgiving appeal of salvation. This giving of God to man creates a completely new moral situation, both as far as the direction of man to God is concerned, which, thanks to it, finds on the part of God an approval and actualisation, but also in relation to man's dignity, as the object of interest, love, devotion and even sacrifice — on the part of God.

It also throws new light on the problem of man's ultimate goal itself and on the means which lead to its realization — on the one hand, and on the role of religion, on the other³. For, religion has an essential meaning for the idea of the ultimate goal itself and for the means of its realization, and owing to that it throws light on the entire moral behaviour of man and on all domains of his proceeding. Christianity makes the ultimate goal more proximate and gives it a concrete shape. Thanks to that it gives him the possibility, — if it's possible to say, — to use „the abbreviated ways of its realization” putting at his disposal both religious and supernatural means of personal perfection.

The supernatural and at the same time personal character of the ultimate goal of man also shows in a new light the matter of his personal dignity and consequently also of his moral obligation. The moral obligation is in its deepest foundations and in its nature — love, and it can be interpreted in that way. This character of being love becomes more comprehensible just then when we consider its supernatural bases. Moral obligation is in its essence a natural liking of the good that we desire for ourselves and for others; it is the personal opening to the good. However, only when we have the consciousness of the personal Supreme Good that gives itself to us by love, which overcomes all the hindrances that might the mutual giving in love make difficult, — then the loving character of the moral obligation becomes fully comprehensible. Hence, there exists a close union between the entire concept of man's ultimate goal and between a complete interpretation of the moral obligation⁴.

However, man's ultimate goal can be understood as a rule

³ B. Inlender, *Nadprzyrodzone powołanie człowieka* (The supernatural vocation of man), *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 74 (1970) 198.

⁴ K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (Love and responsibility), Lublin 1960. p. 85; D. v. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Regensburg 1971, p. 117.

ordinating the whole of man's proceeding, because all human deeds are adjusted to it. This adjustment takes the form of two functions: rights and obligations (duties). Therefore it can be considered in those categories. Such a system of rights and obligations whose subjects are persons or social groups is called the moral order⁵. A system with a more or less defined obligations is called the normative system, or the system of norms; while a system of rights having their final basis in man's ultimate goal and its direct basis in his personal dignity — is called a system of person's rights⁶. The whole of both systems, which are strictly connected with themselves, is called: the moral order or natural law.

This order, as an element of the order of all things, has an objective character, but it appears as the voice of reason in three ways:

a) as an individual voice of conscience of each particular man, so as a concrete order of the practical conscience with which every human person is bestowed;

b) as a system of super-current norms which express — what we sometimes call — the conscience of humanity — and which are functioning in practice as the *common moral conviction of men*, or as bodies of norms generally accepted in one or many and even in all societies;

c) as a system of orders and recommendations which constitute man's answer to the appeal of love, directed to men by God who gives himself to man by his forgiving and salutary love⁷.

Thus, the moral order is an objective disposition of norms strictly united with each other and mutually subordinated in such a way that the particular norms make up a specific kind of application of the general ones. It can be also made into a system of rights, of subjective rights to which every human person is entitled because of his personal dignity but also because of his vocation, because of the obligation to realize the ultimate goal personally achieved. Taking into account the number of persons and their equal personal dignity, the moral order is also a system of mutual interpersonal obligations and rights. All the persons are the subjects of those rights and obligations and all of them are directed to the same goal.

In that way the moral order, in which man's opening to the transcendental values is expressed and takes concrete shapes, becomes: of necessity the opening of the human person to other persons: to God and to the neighbours. And so, — as the opening of

⁵ John XXIII, pope, Encyclical *Pacem in terris*, n. 8.

⁶ *The Common Declaration of Rights of Man*. Introduction.

⁷ J. Fuchs, *Moral und Moraltheologie nach dem Konzil*, Freiburg i Br. 1967, p. 27.

man to the transcendental values is expressed and fulfilled in freedom, so also the opening to God and to the neighbours is being realized by love.

2. Freedom as Man's Opening to Good

Man as a reasonable being is of his nature free and he cannot as a man act otherwise but only in a free way. He cannot — as a man be directed in another way to his goal but only through its perception and recognition, by a free judgement — which indicates that things acknowledged should be accepted or rejected, that some should be imitated and others deserve turning away to others. Thanks to it a reasonable being is the master of his deeds, is free in his nature. Freedom, so comprehended, can be called transcendental freedom because it remains in a transcendental relation to man's nature, as its essential property. Freedom, so understood has an absolute character and is subject to no limitations that would mean a violation of the elementary structure of man's nature⁸.

Christian doctrine stresses the personal character of freedom pointing to the dignity of the human person as to the basis of man's freedom⁹. This reference to the natural dignity of the human person has great importance as far as the substantiation of social freedom and the right to freedom are concerned because this dignity implies reasonableness and freedom they constitute its basis because they prove man's likeness to God. However, the Christian doctrine also speaks about dignity in the supernatural meaning, about dignity based on the fact of redemption, of participation in grace and of the heritage of eternal glory¹⁰. So, in the light of theological truths one sees even more distinctly the absolute character of man's freedom and the autonomy of the human person that knows no restrictions even from God himself, who in His redemptive action, in relation to man, treats him as a partner. Thus, when the Christian doctrine speaks about the dignity of the human person, it really refers to this elementary autonomy of man, to his freedom in the ontological sense, but it also shows its moral aspect, its personal inviolability.

This freedom, in its essence, is not man's power but a way of his spiritual existence and action consisting in the ability of di-

⁸ *Sth.* 1—2, q. 1, a. 2, c; J. B. Metz, *Freiheit als philosophisch-theologisches Grenzproblem*, in: *Gott in der Welt. Festgabe für Karl Rahner*, Freiburg i. Br. 1964, vol. I, p. 289; J. M a j k a, *Chrześcijańska koncepcja wolności a prawo do wolności* (The Christian Conception of Freedom and the Right to Freedom), *Znak* 19 (1967) 288.

⁹ *Sth.* 1, q. 83, a. 1, c; J o h n XXIII, Enc. *Pacem in terris* n. 9; AAS 44 (1952) 791; J. C o u r t n e y M u r r a y, *La Déclaration sur la liberté religieuse*, *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 88 (1966) 46.

¹⁰ J o h n XXIII, Enc. *Pacem in terris*, n. 10.

recting oneself to the highest values that is to the good and truth, which are able to fulfil and to perfect him. Hence the concept of freedom has always its reference to truth and to good as to the goal of man's activity. Man cannot be a participant of truth in another way but only by the fact that he bows his mind towards it; thus he notices it in a certain way and comes to the internal conviction that it cannot be rejected. Similarly, one cannot become a participant of good otherwise but only by getting a knowledge of it, by inclining one's will to it and by finding a liking in it. In that sense all the people are equally free, similarly as they are equally reasonable and in the same degree persons.

Man is conscious of his freedom, which first of all consists in the ability of making a choice of good, or, in any case, of what the reason presents to our will as good¹¹. This consciousness of a choice of particular goods and of good or evil is in so far misleading as man has the tendency to see there the essence of freedom, while it is only a reflex of ontological freedom and not its full nor not always its proper realization. For, freedom consists in the ability of directing oneself's aspirations towards values, that is — to goods meant to cause our personal perfection, our fulfilment. So, the choice of a smaller good, and particularly the choice of evil considered as good, is not the realization of freedom but an expression of its limitation. Not every choice makes us perfectly free, although each of them is a symptom of freedom. Every man — as a person — practises his freedom by making choices, but he does it in an imperfect way as freedom of each of us has many limitations in our practical activity. It is so because of two reasons:

a) We have no direct view of our goal that would fully answer the aspirations of our nature and would constitute in the full sense of the word the *bonum naturae humanae*; we rather have groups of values which can make us the goal nearer while remaining to it in a definite proportion. In consequence, we do not reach our ultimate goal by a single act of will, but the aspiration to it requires a constant choice made by us of newer and newer particular goods.

b) Our freedom — as E. Mounier¹² in a bit different meaning puts it — is "situated", because as freedom of every particular person it is not absolute but it is psychologically, socially and historically conditioned; it is also theologically conditioned by our present state after the original sin which brought a limitation of man's freedom considered as the ability to aspire towards truth and good¹³.

These limitations do not deprive us of the possibility of using

¹¹ *Sth.* 1—2, q. 8, a. 1, c.

¹² E. Mounier, *Wprowadzenie do egzystencjalizmów* (The introduction to the Existentialisms), Kraków 1964, p. 71.

¹³ *Breviarium fidei*, Poznań 1964, VII, 10, 28, 59, 124.

freedom, and what is more, they do not diminish our responsibility for its usage, because as reasonable beings we can only by usage of freedom reach our proper goals, perfect ourselves and fulfil ourselves as persons, and only by the use of freedom we can reach our ultimate goal. In other words, freedom is not only given to us, but also set as a task; it is not only the ability to make a choice, but also a task of making a proper use of this ability, of making choices which would be more and more perfect.

Thus, freedom goes together with responsibility that extends both to the use of freedom itself and to the influence which it has on its „being situated“, that limits it.

Speaking about limitations of freedom, we often have in mind the fact that the freedom of another man constitutes the limitation of our freedom. It is one more understanding, which in the light of the above shown conception of freedom, is easy to explain. The freedom of another man does not only not limit our freedom, but it supports it, reveals it and even conditions. Only when everybody is free we can also be really free¹⁴. Not only in the meaning that freedom is common to us as human nature is, and the menace to the freedom of another man is also a threat to my freedom, — but also in the sense that freedom is of decisive importance for the social „situation“ of our freedom, — it does create proper social conditions for freedom, it allows us to live in a climate of freedom. Thus, freedom realized by others approximates truth and good, which are the subjects of our own common aspirations¹⁵.

In the light of these considerations freedom becomes both a right and an obligation of man. We are obliged to freedom because of our ultimate goal and on behalf of the order of personal perfection, but also on behalf of other men. We must always liberate ourselves and aspire to be more and more perfectly free, so that we ourselves and our brothers be more perfectly free. Only the man who is free himself can liberate others.

The right to freedom authorizes a person not to be limited by external social conditions in the use of freedom, and by it not to be hindered in his own personal perfection. It does not mean that he cannot be subject to any limitations at all, but that he be not limited in the realization of good, in the aspiration to things that cause his perfection and development. The right to freedom cannot be based on the negative meaning of freedom but it must be adequate to our internal freedom. It does not only mean freedom of something but also freedom to something, to good, freedom of aspirations, freedom in the realization of goals adequate to the

¹⁴ K. Jaspers, *Möglichkeiten eines neuen Humanismus*, München 1951, p. 324.

¹⁵ J. Majka, *art. cit.*, p. 292.

human nature, freedom in the development of initiative in that range. It must be freedom that opens man and opens to him, as to a reasonable being all the possibilities. It must be an opening to a constant development, to a growth of humanity in us.

3. Love as Man's Opening to God to the Neighbours

Love in moral literature is considered either as one of the Divine virtues or as social love, mostly understood as a social principle, being a certain pendant to justice. It is considered that among those two virtues or social principles there is a complementary relation, although the complementary aspect itself is not equally understood: for instance — it is stated that justice is the regulator of social life while love is its motor¹⁶. It is however a picturesque definition which requires further explanation. It is also often repeated that they are two fundamental principles of social life of which one completes the other in such a way that social life would be impossible without one and the other. They complete and condition themselves in such a way that only working together they can constitute the basis of a healthy social order¹⁷. However, there are always rather serious differences of opinions concerning the way of their mutual completion, and the relation between the two principles, consequently also their understanding and especially in references to social life.

There is an old, nineteenth century opinion saying that love enters where justice ends; that means that there are matters, or even vast domains of matters which are defined by law, to which principles of justice are to be applied: and there are other domains of life where law cannot and should not interfere and therefore they should be left to love. It is not difficult here to recognize the elements of conflict existing between the Catholic liberals and the so-called „Social Catholics”, concerning the limits of justice. Theoretically both opinions have already been overcome; they are based on a false conception of justice, which could be called „positivists conception” because it narrows general justice to the positive law. It is also a narrow concept of love as it often reduces it to narrowly understood love of the neighbour in many cases identified with charity only.

What then is love as a social principle, or even more, — is there love as a way of man's action, a way of his attitude to other men? First of all, it is an aspiration to the good or to a group of values

¹⁶ Pius XI, pope, Enc. *Quadragesimo anno*, AAS 23 (1931) 217; Pius XII, pope, Enc. *Summi pontificatus*, AAS 31 (1939) 423; A. Nowicki, *Miłość społeczna w świetle wypowiedzi papieży społeczników* (Social Love in the Documents of Popes), Lublin 1964, p. 188.

¹⁷ E. Link, *Subsidiaritätsprinzip*, Freiburg i. Br. 1955, p. 102.

which we find in a person, or in which we would like together with others to participate. Love then expresses a dynamic attitude, an attitude of aspiring to the participation or co-sharing in good, as to the means of our perfection. For, perfection is nothing else but a degree of participation in good.

We can speak about various levels, aspects and domains of love: We speak about love as a feeling, as a tendency, as a desire or a choice of will, about giving of something possessed, about sharing one's own personality, about union, devotion, or about the unifying, transforming and always extolling grace, — but it is always the same love consisting in man's commitment to the problem of good, which we find in others, for the sake of participation, union, perfection and fulfilment.

Here we are interested in a special kind of love which we want to call social or Christian love, for every Christian love is social. Although some speak about social love that is not christian, yet we say, that every true social love contains certain essential elements of Christianity. This thesis, although at first glance complicated and difficult to prove, becomes more understandable if we make at least a short analysis of social love.

Love — similarly to freedom — is a form of existence of reasonable beings, a motor of their activity, because they do not show their existence in another way but only by their action, and they do not act otherwise than only by aspiring to the participation in transcendental values in order to achieve a higher perfection, to be in a fuller sense. Social love is a kind of man's social existence, "the soul of the social order"¹⁸. The essence of society consists in the common aspiring to good¹⁹. Social love is therefore the essential, or even constitutional, element of social bonds. It could be perhaps called "the bond" itself, were the term not taken by the sociologists; in their opinion it contains several external elements which do not constitute the essence of social love itself.

Who then is the subject of love, what is its object and what is the relation between subject and object, or strictly speaking, what relation group is it? Every man who is the member of society, or who lives closer together with others, is of course, the subject of love. The question is: whether or in what sense is he also the object (another man); in what way are allowed to love another man who is yet a person and who, in the order of humanistic relations, cannot

¹⁸ „Caritas vero socialis quasi anima esse debet huius ordinis”. P i u s X I, Enc. *Quadragesimo anno*, AAS 23 (1931) 206.

¹⁹ „Cum societas nihil aliud esse videtur, quam adunatio hominum ad unum aliquid communiter agendum”, S. T h o m a s A., *Contra imp. Dei cultum et relig.*, c. 8; J. M a j k a, *Spoleczna natura człowieka a istota społeczeństwa* (The social Nature of Man and the essence of society), *Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne* 6 (1959) f. 1—2, p. 279.

by treated like a thing, like an object that can be utilized as means of our perfection.

In order to answer these questions we must realize the fact that man can have a double relation to good. We can aspire to good as to the object of enjoyment, than is, as to the means by which we want to gain another good; we aspire to it because of having a liking in another good. However, we can also aspire to good because of having a liking in itself. An average man needs money as means of buying other goods; a miser has a liking in them and collects money simply to have them. Briefly speaking, we may aspire to good in order to have it and to aim at it, in order to be, whereby this "to be" is achieved by the participation in higher values which we integrate, with which we identify ourselves in a certain way, so that they become elements of our personality. Only the second kind of aspiring is called love.

However, whether or in what way is the identification with another person possible, if personality presumes peculiarity? This loving of good is in him that type of liking that it stimulates us to obtain a likeness with it by the participation in it. Thus, every person, and particularly the human person is a good that cannot be the object of neither of enjoyment nor of appropriation, but it can be the object of liking with the tendency of obtaining a likeness. Yet the object of aspiring is not the person but the good which he represents, or the good we wish for him and ourselves at once. Love aims to share the participation in good together.

Here we reach the problem of a particular role of common good for social love. If the aspiring to good, considered as a value and also as means of formation of human personality, is the essential element of spiritual existence of reasonable beings, then the group of goods to which man aims is in some way an example, the material of his humanity, and it remains to him and to his forming personality in a transcendental relation. This group of goods appears to each of us as a value, not only to our but also in relation to every humanity, and therefore we take it in the perspective of participation²⁰. This ideal may be in its contents richer and richer, yet even in a very simplified form, it has always a reference to absolute values and implies a (looking to the Absolute) reflexion of good which raises man to a higher degree of being and contains the first trace of transcendental participation.

Our practical relation to the common good, the effort aiming at its realization constitutes an essential fascination with the good in which we would like to participate in order to be more. In other words we do not aspire to good only to satisfy one of our

²⁰ J. Krucina, *Dobro wspólne. Teoria i jej zastosowanie* (Common Good. Theory and application), Wrocław 1972, p. 65.

actual needs, but we make efforts in order that both we and other men might be in a fuller sense men. Such an effort and such an attitude is an act of love and contains not only a relation to the other man as man, but also such a relation to it, which is the result of reflection (even if it is incomplete and imperfect) of the absolute good of humanity. We understand by — the absolute good of humanity — such good, to which man as a reasonable being is open, or otherwise — the good which is the limit or rather, the fulness of our human likings. Every love to another human person contains these elements.

That brings us the problem of the character of the first act of love, that is of man's elementary turning to the other man or to the common good. It is sign of natural solidarity among men (in a particular, Christian and not a solidararian meaning of the word), or is it already a religious act and hence a supernatural one? In the light of our present considerations the answer to this difficult question becomes a bit easier. Namely, there is no doubt, that each more active attitude towards the common good of at least two persons (a liking in it, the aspiring to the common participation, and the sacrifice made of direct profits), is a Christian attitude and implies a reference to the Supreme Good and a reference to the other man seen in the perspective of this Good; it is therefore an act of honour of God and an act of love of the neighbour in the Christian understanding of those formulae. It prejudices the ontological character of this act; it would denote a narrowness in theological thinking if we would like to put any limits to the acting of grace, the more so as the primordial act of love, about which we are speaking here, get a full splendour and also a great enrichment and fulfilment only in the light of the entire Christian doctrine and of the practise of life of the holy People of God. It is, however, always the same love owing to which we find a liking in God and also aim to the participation in other treasures of His goodness.

There is still the question of the ways and means of practical realization of love so understood. The spiritual existence and development of reasonable beings takes place not only, not first of all, by an intentional aspiring to good, but by all kinds of their actions if these fulfil the conditions of an act of love, that is — if they are done with the perspective of human good, and if love really is the motor of action. Here we do not think about the so-called good intentions, but about a rational consciousness of the realization of an essential good, that is about the perception of the reason of good.

Love becomes the stimulus, the motor and the reason of man's actions: it is the source of his dynamics, that is — the form of his perfection. Man cannot grow in his humanity but only by love. Hence, we cannot say that love begins where justice ends. All hu-

man actions, if they really are such, and if they are to raise us to higher and higher level of humanity and to liberate us from determination of a material character, should have their origin in love. Even the economic activity of man — though it sounds paradoxically — should be inspired by love.

Can love exceed the limits of justice in that sense that man gives much more of himself that he should: that is, than he is obliged to give by justice? Does the dynamics of love justify such proceeding? — Yes, undoubtedly, if it is within the limits of rationality of the ultimate goal, so, if such action does not impede the obtaining of this ultimate goal, but on the contrary, if it shortens the way to its realization. It is exactly this particular, extraordinary dynamics of love which constitutes a powerful means of moral development and which — in a certain sense — is able to revolutionize the social living together of men. It is the dynamics of sacrifice, the second acceleration of moral development; it is based on completely different principles of reasonability, on the reasonability of consecration.

Touching the problem of practical realization of love, we cannot omit the difficult matter of interpersonal conflicts. Very often social love is opposed to social conflicts because it is thought, that it simply constitutes a means which prevents the origin of social tensions. A society directed by love, is, accordingly, — a society without tensions, and everybody who wants to be directed in social life by the principle of love, should at any prize avoid tensions with other men.

This opinion is opposed to a thesis on the socially creative character of conflicts, or even on the necessity of aggravating the social contradictions and on the battle of classes; only in that way social progress can be obtained and the realization of the principles of social justice can be brought nearer. The Marxist theory of the classe-warfare met with severe criticism on the part of almost all representatives of the Catholic social doctrine up to recent years. Hence the contradictions: love — class hatred, cooperation — conflict, were the obligatory schemes on both sides of the barricade.

The origin of the so-called "theology of revolution" was the first breach, which does not mean — a well done breach, in those schemes of thinking. Today there is a much more quiet approach to the problem of conflicts in social life. Attempts are being made of analysis with the intention of making a general theory of conflicts in the Christian thought and activity²¹. Social love so understood does not necessarily require to avoid conflicts at any prize; namely it is not allowed to avoid them for the sake of love itself, that is for the prize of investigation of good, of aspiring to it and of sharing it with others, or for the sake of the so-called "holy

²¹ H. R. Lückert, *Mit Konflikten leben lernen*, *Diakonia* 6 (1975) 221—230.

peace". Yet, love is a method of reaching a fuller und fuller participation in the good by means of conflicts, thanks to a proper overcoming them. It refers not only to internal conflicts which we must always overcome if we want to find a place for love in our life; we must always be ready for sacrifices. Yet, it refers also to external conflicts with other men or groups. Aiming at good we must constantly meet with conflicts, must overcome them by love that goes also to the limits of sacrifice.

We speak, of course, always about conflicts which are not the result of hatred, of the negation of another man, but about conflicts caused by differences of goals and means of action. Examples of such conflicts are to be found both in the Gospel and in the whole activity of the Church, and in the existing societies within the Church, as well. Avoiding conflict at any prize would mean the resignation of good, an escape from duties, an embezzlement of the love of God and of man. The thing therefore is not to avoid conflicts so as not to fall into conformism, but to make everything in order that love could triumph over them.

The search for the best solutions of conflicts causes the opening of man to the good and his readiness to look for it inspite of difficulties and sacrifices; it is also an opening to the other man. So, we can find ourselves much further of the other man while avoiding conflicts, shutting ourselves before him, than while we look for hard ways of love in difficult, but often very fruitful, confrontings with them.

So, there are two forms of a man becoming more and more perfect: his opening to the highest values and his meetings with other persons in freedom and love.