

God loves me, but ... As I Am?

Maybe Eternity Can Help.

God's Love

I'm sure I've written about this before, somewhere. One comes across the idea in the most surprising places\*, that God made me, and made me as I am, and God loves me, loves me unconditionally as I am; I am xxx, therefore God, of course, is happy, or at least understanding, when I act on the basis of this inherent, essential nature of mine, xxx. Little of this, I believe, is the case, indeed, is potentially amoral.

Often, as we may expect, the context of such thinking is homosexuality, but it could easily be a host of other things, many applying to most, if not all of us. Of course, I do not question the idea that God made us, and made us individually, uniquely, and purposefully, or that God loves us, each of us; but I do question the possibility that *God made us as we now are* – indeed, I think such thinking is not truly Christian. God made us as we were and should have remained – the human race, and ourselves individually - but, sadly, we have all fallen short of what God intended. We are all sinners, and live in our sins; and God does not love those.

Yet I would not claim, as suggested, that God reserves his love only for what he knows we can become, and denies his love for our present being. Maybe eternity – a pre-occupation of mine – can help. If (as surely is the case) we are “bound for” eternity, if this life is only a small part of the whole, our fuller nature is already present; for it is wrong, as I have certainly suggested before, to think of our fullest existence as something which (only) starts after this life, and then goes on “for ever” (since “for ever” is some kind of temporal thinking, to which, truly, eternity is alien). If we have existence in eternity (which, of course, being time-bound, we cannot conceive of) our eventual, real, form, is in some sense already present; what (God knows) we may become, is “already” fulfilled; this, as suggested, we cannot conceive of; but God is not time-bound.

God, perhaps, from his viewpoint, loves us as we eternally are. Does this absolve us from the struggle with sin and (fallen) human nature? Of course not! We must exist, perhaps, in the tension between what we currently are, and what we might become, between time and eternity.

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\*Fr James Martin veers in this direction in *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, New York, HarperOne, 2012, p. 381.