

John, chapter 11, verse 35

The Bishop of Edinburgh, the Most Reverend Richard Holloway, has urged the Anglican Church to accept that “adultery is caused by our genetics” and not “condemn affairs as sinful and wrong”. A recent cladistic reconstruction of the gospels casts light on this idea

1. Jesus went unto the mount of olives; and in his stead he left a man from the north.
 2. And the scribes and the pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,
 3. They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.
 4. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?
 5. And he said unto them, is it not written in the book of Darwin that those who go forth and multiply shall be most blest across the generations?
 6. Even as the voice of the turtle is heard in the land of Galapagos.
 7. And Darwin begat Dawkins. And Dawkins said, that which prospers is the gene, and only the gene.
 8. And the gene is selfish.
 9. I say unto you, the gene shapes the body, and the doings of the body, to its ends; it will go forth multiplying without fear of God.
 10. For the Trivers and the Willards have written that the man, being of greater size, needs must bed many women. And the Wrights and the Riddleys and their kin have published such, on the shelves and on the coffee tables, and in the pages that are called Op Ed.
 11. And so, let him among you who has not evolved cast the first stone.
 12. For it is human nature.
 13. And a bearded pharisee spoke, saying, this is an absurdly reductionist view of humanity, paying scant heed to the complex interactions of environment and genetics in human behavioural patterns.
 14. Another cried out, you seem not to have grasped the objective nature of the evolutionist programme, which is not meant to provide normative statements about what should be the case, but merely to clarify the adaptations the organism has made to date.
 15. And a third said, besides which, the concept of original sin has an established pre-eminence in the church's teaching. To say that the fallen state is natural makes no difference.
 16. And they cast the first stone.
 17. And the second, and the third.
 18. Until the man of the north was heard no more.
 19. And the woman walked off untouched; she kept these things to herself, and pondered them in her heart.
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