

Letters to the editor:

Responses to Jeffrey Clark:

When I picked up last week's issue of *The Collegian*, I was disappointed to read Jeffrey Clark's letter to the editor regarding homosexuality. Clark's letter was in response to Sally Ryan Burgess' editorial "Call for Tolerance for Homosexuality," which appeared in the March 2 edition. In her article, she accepted her own homosexuality, illustrated the inherent difficulties of such a way of life and attacked homophobic attitudes in general. I found Burgess' article to be

inspirational, a refreshing example of wisdom and courage on a topic that is not always emphasized at the University of Richmond. Clark's article on the other hand, was a sharp rebuttal, tearing down her entire argument from a "biblical" viewpoint. While well written, it was a thin veil behind which his ignorance was clearly and unmistakably visible. As I began to read the article I became disgusted, before I was halfway through I was angry, and when I had finished, I felt

embarrassed to be attending the same university as the writer. How could anyone possibly be so closed-minded as to think in such a manner, and furthermore, be so sure of his or her false conviction as to condemn someone else's lifestyle? Burgess' piece was a beautiful example of self-knowledge, advocating tolerance and acceptance. Clark's criticism was an ugly example of someone who is so ignorant that he is missing out on life, while potentially giving his religion and school a bad name in

the process. There was no need for him to impress his interpretation of the Bible with regard to such a private matter on everyone else. Burgess' article increases the general strength of our campus community; Clark's article directly attacks her personal choices. When dealing with sensitive issues such as this one, it is often best to keep your opinion to yourself.

-Scott Olmstead, RC '02

Jeffrey Clark, in his March 23 article, misjudged my life and devotion to Christ. Unbeknownst to Clark, I read scripture daily, pray and meditate on God's will for my life. I am an innocent and beloved child of God who happens to be gay, and I have accepted Christ as my savior.

I must ask Clark whether his beliefs truly reflect the love and mercy of Christ. I believe that "Thou shall love the lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and thou shall love your

neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:34-40). I believe in the gospel through which Christ creates a new people to live in love, equality, acceptance, compassion, justice, and in communion "one body" (Philippians: 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians: 12:12).

I must reiterate that homosexual acts mentioned in scripture describe homosexual rape, prostitution and abuse. These are sinful acts, not because they are homosexual, but because they are violent. There are no biblical passages that refer to

committed, monogamous, consensual, same sex relationships. There is also no mention of homosexual acts or same sex relationships in the gospels. If homosexuality is such an important concern, then why didn't Jesus have anything to say on the matter?

-Sally Ryan Burgess

I am writing in reply to Jeffrey Clark's letter in the March 23 edition of *The Collegian*. I will not attempt to argue from the Bible, for there seem to be many ways to interpret the Bible. However, I think Clark's argument is as full of holes as he claims Sally Ryan Burgess' argument is. Clark claims in his last paragraph

that it is not his intent to judge Burgess, yet he spends the beginning of his letter citing scripture that would imply that he thinks she is not a good Christian. Clark criticizes Burgess for "subjective pontifications about morality" and "blatant contradictions" in her argument, yet proceeds to point out

specific passages in the Bible that support his statement, ignoring those that would contradict it.

It saddens me greatly to think that in a world already so full of hatred, there are those who would use any religion to justify their own hatred. I find Clark's refusal to disarm his Bible not only offensive, but also

rather frightening. I am also disturbed by his presumption to speak for the consciences of others without being fully informed of the issues that he is judging.

-Abby Doolittle, WC '03

As I opened the March 23 edition of *The Collegian*, a certain article caught my attention. It was an editorial written by Jeffrey Clark, responding to a previous article written by Sally Burgess, about the biblical implications of homosexuality. I'm not naive enough to call myself a champion of gay rights, let alone the rights of any minority group. I'm not gay, and I don't pretend to understand the feelings or experiences of being gay. All I know is that Clark's letter made me mad. Yes, at a campus with a reputation like UR, an emotional response to anything in *The Collegian* is rare, but it did.

Soon, the initial anger about Clark's words gave way to another emotion—sadness. His letter saddened me because it struck deep into the school

unity that the University and the students have tried to establish. It made me realize how much further we have to go to reach that point of acceptance and support on this campus. I think it takes guts to write an article about being gay, slap your name and picture on it, and send it to print for the entire world to see. More guts, I would agree, than hiding behind bigoted, tired arguments about the evil of homosexuality or out-of-context passages from the Old Testament. Let's not forget that for every passage on the evils of homosexuality, there are a dozen exposing values such as love thy neighbor, acceptance and tolerance. I read Burgess' article on coming out, and I do not believe she was "belittling Christians," as Clark accused.

I saw someone coming to grips with who she is,

and taking solace in the fact that her creator accepts her for who she is. The greatest sadness for me is that Clark is a senior. He has been fortunate enough to receive four years of superb higher education here at Richmond. Yet judging by his bigoted words, he has learned little about the world around him. Homosexuals exist and unless you put your head in the sand for your remaining years, you'll probably have to deal with them too. Who knows, you might be friends with one of those "evil" gays right now and not even know it. Open your heart and mind, and as Jesus Christ said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged."

-Brandon Devlin, RC '03