

**A REVIEW OF THE REV. MOSES  
STUART'S PAMPHLET ON  
SLAVERY, ENTITLED  
CONSCIENCE AND THE  
CONSTITUTION**

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A Review of the Rev. Moses Stuart's Pamphlet on Slavery, Entitled Conscience and the Constitution by Rufus W. Clark

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**RUFUS W. CLARK**

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REVIEW

OF THE

REV. MOSES STUART'S PAMPHLET ON

SLAVERY,

ENTITLED

CONSCIENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION,

By RUFUS W. CLARK, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE NORTH CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

*[Originally published in the Boston Daily Atlas]*

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NOTE.

A desire having been very generally expressed, that the Review of Professor Stuart's work on Slavery, which appeared in the Atlas, should be published in a pamphlet form, and one gentleman, of great intelligence and liberality, having kindly offered to defray the expense of an edition of three thousand copies for gratuitous circulation, the author has been induced to accede to this desire, with the hope that a more extended circulation of the Review might promote the cause of human freedom.

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## REVIEW.

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### I.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

It is worthy of remark, that the general and intense agitation of the Slavery question, throughout our country at the present time, is mainly attributable to the slave States themselves. By their zeal for the prosecution of the Mexican war, for the purpose of extending slavery, and the consequent annexation of a large territory to our domain, they have called into existence the State of California, whose free constitution, has not only thrown into confusion their plans for the extension of slavery, but has aroused a degree of feeling, and a spirit of discussion, which will not, we apprehend, very soon abate. With all their anxiety to prevent agitation, especially within the halls of Congress, they have been instrumental, indirectly, in rendering the slavery question the all-absorbing topic, of at least, one session of Congress, and of directing towards its investigation, the highest order of talent in the land. All the readable speeches that have come to us from Washington, during the last six months, have been upon the slavery question. The tariff, post-office reform, internal improvements, private claims, and the Cuba expedition, have been almost lost sight of, in the deep excitement which this subject has awakened. Reporters have written upon little else than slavery, and thus our commercial and political newspapers have been made the channels for communicating slavery arguments and facts, *pro* and *con*, through every city, town, and village in the Union. The stream of discussion, which, but a short time since, was confined to a few newspapers and societies, has suddenly overflowed its banks, and is now entering other channels, and employing them for the purpose of reaching the masses of the community, upon whom the former narrow tide was making but little impression. Matter, which but a few years

since, was pronounced incendiary in its character, is now gravely embodied in speeches, made before our national Senators and Representatives. Divines, editors, lawyers, and merchants too, are entering the field, and the Constitutional and Scriptural arguments, as well as the evils and political bearings of slavery are freely discussed, in cars, steamboats, hotels, in the shop, at the fire-side, upon the farm, — wherever newspapers are read, or the claims of humanity are felt.

Nor do we see any prospect of this agitation being arrested, while the evils of slavery exist, and especially while there is so strong a disposition manifested by the friends of the system *to extend it over soil that is now free*. To behold California knocking at the door of our Union, and so long refused admittance, simply because she presents herself in the pure white robes of liberty, with no chain in her hand, and no curse upon her lips, with her countenance radiant with the beauties of philanthropy and love, adorned with a wreath in which are inwrought the stars of our national banner, without the stripes, is a spectacle upon which the free, intelligent Christian citizen of this *Christian Republic*, cannot gaze without emotion, *deep, strong, intense emotion*. To see, too, those who have so earnestly contended for State rights, — who have so eloquently and vehemently advocated the doctrine that each State should manage its own domestic institutions, standing at the door and saying to this fair suppliant, — You shall not enter, — saying, as some have done, — This Union shall be shattered into a thousand fragments, before our votes shall sustain this free Constitution, — is certainly enough to awaken a spirit of agitation, which cannot easily nor speedily be allayed.

MR. WEBSTER and MR. STUART appear before us, as professed pacificators in the fiery conflict of opinion which is raging. They come with their Constitutional and Bible arguments, confident that their words will hush the storm, and reconcile the hostile parties. But this agitation is the natural and inevitable result of the genius of our institutions. While we are educating so many thousands of thinking men and women, with consciences; while our sympathies are so often called forth in behalf of the oppressed and suffering of other nations, while we are moved by appeals to send the blessed

Gospel to the millions who are dwelling in darkness, we cannot but be keenly alive to the injustice, the inhumanity of American slavery. We cannot educate our sensibilities to feel for one form of oppression, and not for another. We cannot have hearts that throb with intense sympathy for the struggling Hungarians, the oppressed Poles, the vanquished Greeks, and yet remain unmoved under the spectacle of three millions of our own citizens, laboring to rend asunder their chains. We cannot heap execrations upon the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and weep over the misfortunes of Kossuth, and yet have no pity for the panting fugitive in our own land, whose only crime is, a desire to be free.

Scheming politicians may succeed in this, but the mass of the people cannot. They are unable to reach such a depth of hypocrisy, as to regulate the exercise of their humanity by the locality of the suffering or oppression, and be full of emotion, and overwhelmed with indignation for wrongs committed at a distance, and ice-hearted under scenes of distress that are at our own door. Nor will compromise bills, speeches on the Constitution, or a labored exegesis of scriptural authorities upon slavery, produce this result. There is not a statesman or professor in the land, who has adroitness and power enough, to give this tone to the humanity and conscience of these Northern States. Neither is there one who has sufficient skill to solve the problem, as to how we shall keep slavery in the bosom of the intelligence, and light, and liberty, and christianity of this nation, *and make it lie there quietly*; how we shall enable two such diametrically opposing elements as American slavery and American liberty, to harmonize and dwell together peaceably.

Stop the tide of intelligence that is flowing from our systems of education — extinguish the light of the Gospel, that shines with such intensity upon the community from the American pulpit, subject humane, noble-hearted editors to an Austrian censorship, annihilate three-quarters of our literature, which is so thoroughly pervaded with the spirit of universal liberty, and then will a calm spread over this nation, such as reigns over the Dead Sea. Then, and not till then, can the slave-dealer listen to the music of clanking chains, with none to disturb the serenity of his mind. Then,