

A Review of “The Law”, Frederic Bastiat

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This book was written back during the French Revolution days, just after the War of Independence in the United States. Frederic Bastiat was a philosopher of the time, and perhaps the best thing about this essay he has written, is that it is so simple, that almost anyone can pick it up and see his point.

Without a doubt, this book ought to be in every politics and economics class in the entire world. It is simply the best and easiest to understand book on simple rights and government economics there is. Granted, there are many things with which he does not deal, but the basic premises he puts forth are the best foundation you can give anyone who hopes to live in a free and just society.

What Mr. Bastiat really works on is the basic concept of what a government is, how it should function, and why it exists. He does an excellent job of detailing some of the many ways in which government politics are twisted to serve economic means.

One of his chief points is that of legal plunder. Or, in other words, allowing the government to do things, specifically, benefitting one person at the expense of another, that a citizen of society would never be able to accomplish individually without breaking laws and resorting to criminal activities. This is a fundamental principle of free society, and something that we should really consider today.

Bastiat also goes into the concept of rights, and how rights operate, at their basic and most elemental level, and then continues to extrapolate that to point out the many violations of the day.

On one failing point, Bastiat does not fully explain the implementation of his ideals. The reason being, most likely, that it was not in his purpose, nor did he have the time. So, if someone is looking for a means to put Bastiat's principles into action, they will not find much advice in this book. He does point out the great advances of the early United States, though he would not be so glad with the US's progress thereafter.

Sometimes Bastiat is mistaken as saying that government should of itself remain limited. However, in this book, what he is saying is that government must always be restrained and limited, by whatever means necessary to keep it restrained. He is not clear on the matter, though, so this is a confusing part of the book.

In summary, this is a simple must have for every citizen who wishes to maintain, promote, or encourage a just and free society. The basics and resounding truths he brings forth in this book are some of the best that can be had, and at the same time, are in simple terms which will not confuse the average reader.