

"On the basis of 'promulgation' of eternal law, we make the following distinctions of law: 1) The physical law of nature: this is consequent on the mere existence of things as necessary law of their being . . . 2) The natural moral law: this is given to man together with his rational nature as law of liberty, not of course in the form of innate moral ideas, but as the rational capacity and as the norm of free acts discernible through insight into the nature of man and the world by reason itself. 3) The positive divine law, promulgated by the direct revelation of the divine message to mankind. Regarding the positive revelation of God, we distinguish: a) The primitive law, which God gave in Paradise and after the fall to our first parents and through them to their descendants. b) The Mosaic Law . . . c) The law of the New Testament or the law of Christ, which God revealed through Christ and as the 'law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:2) imprinted in the hearts of Christians. 4) The positive human law.

As to the positive revealed law of God, it is concerned with the natural order of creation and the supernatural order of grace.

. . . As to positive human law, it derives from God (from his promulgation) a) in so far as it defines more precisely the laws revealed by God or enforces their observance to the extent that this is deemed necessary for the common good, and b) in so far as human authority (ecclesiastical or civil) is empowered through natural or positive revelation to lay down more specific and precise enactments of that which is found in the order of creation or the order of grace, though less specifically and precisely."

(pp. 237-238)

-- Bernard Häring, The Law of Christ, translated by Edwin G. Kaiser (Paramus, N.J.: The Newman Press, 1966), Volume One: General Moral Theology, pp. 227, 235-238.

C. The Meanings of the Term "Law" in Scripture

1. In the Old Testament several Hebrew words are translated "law"

These words convey the ideas of "sentence" (שֵׁפֶט), "statute" (פֶּקֶד), "command" (צִוִּיּוֹת), and "judgment" (מִשְׁפָּט). But by far, the Hebrew word used most frequently in the Old Testament is TORAH (תּוֹרָה).

It is used 217 times in the Old Testament. In the Authorized Version it is translated 216 times "law" and once "manner."

2. In the New Testament the word used almost exclusively is NOMOS (νόμος). It has various meanings, but in the A.V. it is translated in all of its 195 uses by "law."

3. In Scripture these two words (TORAH and NOMOS) appear to have four basic areas of meaning:

a. A rule, a principle, to which physical or moral actions conform

b. A rule, a standard, a norm, to which moral actions ought to conform