

- d. The *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), in Questions 83 and 85, states:

Q. 83 -- What is the Office of the Keys?

A. The preaching of the holy Gospel and Church discipline; by which two things the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

Q. 85 -- How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by church discipline?

A. In this way: that, according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or life, and after repeated brotherly admonition refuse to turn from their errors or evil ways, they are complained of to the Church or to its proper officers, and, if they neglect to hear them also, are by them excluded from the holy Sacraments and the Christian communion, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and if they promise and show real amendment, they are again received as members of Christ and his Church.

- e. The *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), Chapter 18, states:

"And seeing that there must be discipline in the Church, and that, among the ancient Fathers, excommunication was in use, and there were ecclesiastical judgments among the people, of God, wherein this discipline was exercised by godly men; it belongs also to the minister's duty, for the edifying of the Church, to moderate this discipline, according to the condition of the time and public estate, and according to necessity. Wherein this rule is always to be holden, that "all things ought to be done to edification, decently, and in order" (I Cor. xiv. 40), without any oppression or tumult Yet, notwithstanding there ought to be a discipline among the ministers -- for there should be intelligent inquiry in the synods touching the life and doctrine of the ministers -- those that offend should be rebuked of the elders, and be brought into the way, if they be not past recovery; or else be deposed, and, as wolves, be driven from the Lord's flock by the true pastors if they be incurable. For, if they be false teachers, they are in no wise to be tolerated."

- f. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), Chapter 30 ("Of Church Censures") states:

- I. The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.
- II. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.