

The Heidelberg Catechism

85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?

In this way: that, according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or in life, and after several brotherly admonitions do not 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 denied the holy sacraments and thereby excluded from 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.¹

¹ Mt 18:15-20; Lk 15:20-24; 1 Cor 5:3-5, 11-13; 2 Cor 2:6-11; 2 Thes 3:14-15; 2 Jn 10-11