

Christ has provided the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to give entry to the faithful and to bar and cast out the obstinate sinner.

- I. **Necessary Ground Work (Q. 88)**
 - A. Who possesses the keys?
 - B. What is the Kingdom of Heaven?

- II. **Key of Proclamation (Q. 89)**
 - A. How does preaching open the KH?
 - 1. How does one enter the KH?
 - 2. Proclamation of the Gospel opens heaven
 - B. How does preaching close the KH?

- III. **Key of Restoration/Excommunication (Q. 90)**
 - A. Orientation of the Answers
 - B. Members only
 - C. Requirement to use the key
 - D. Procedure for its use
 - E. Levitical example
 - F. Ultimate goal of the key

Question 88:

You told us but now, that those who in confession and life declare themselves to be infidels, profane and ungodly, should by the keys of the kingdom of heaven be driven from this Supper. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Answer:

The preaching of the gospel and ecclesiastical discipline, by which heaven is opened to the believers, and is shut against the unbelievers (a).

(a) Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:22-23

Question 89:

How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching the gospel?

Answer:

The kingdom of heaven is opened when, by the commandment of Christ, it is publicly declared to everyone who believes that all their sins are pardoned by God due to the merit of Christ, as they embrace by a lively faith the promise of the gospel. But to the contrary, the kingdom of heaven is shut when it is announced to all infidels and hypocrites that as long as the wrath of God abides upon them, they perish in their wickedness, according to which testimony of the gospel God will judge them in this life and also in the life to come (a).

(a) Job 20:21-23; Matt. 16:19; John 3:31-36; 12:48; 20:21-23

Question 90:

How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by ecclesiastical discipline?

Answer:

The kingdom of heaven is shut when, according to the commandments of Christ, those who profess to be Christians, but who, in their doctrine and life, show themselves aliens from Christ, and after being admonished, will not depart from their error, heresies, or wickedness, are made known to the church. If they do not obey the church's admonition, they are by the same church to be kept from the sacrament and shut out of the congregation by authority received from Christ, and by God Himself shut out of the kingdom of heaven (a).

(a) Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:3-5, 11-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15

The kingdom of heaven is opened if such persons as above profess and declare an amendment of life, nothing to the contrary being able to be proved upon strict scrutiny and search. These are to be received again in love and tenderness as members of Christ and His church (b).

(b) Luke 15:20-24; 2 Cor. 2:6-7, 10, 11