

the day of visitation

extract of Proposition V & VI § xii

§ xii. First, we say God gives to everyone a *day and time of visitation* during which they may be saved, but we do not mean the whole time of every person's life, though in some cases it may be extended to the hour of death, as we see in the case of the thief converted on the cross. However it is at least a sufficient period of time to exonerate God for the condemnation of each man, which may be sooner for some and later for others, according to what God in his wisdom considers right. So it is possible that many may outlive this day, after which there would be no possibility of salvation for them, and God justly allows them to be hardened as a just punishment for their unbelief, and even raises them up as instruments of wrath and makes them a scourge to one another. To people in this condition it would be correct to apply the scriptures which are abused to claim that God forces men to sin. This is expressed by the apostle (Romans 1, from verse 17 to the end) especially verse 28: "and since they did not want to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do things which are not fitting." The example of Esau (Hebrews 12:16-17) shows that many may outlive the day of God's gracious visitation to them. He sold his birthright; which shows he had it once and was able to keep it, but afterwards, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected. The same idea is shown by Christ's weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:42), saying: "If only you had known on this your day the things that make for your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes." This plainly means there was a time when they might have known these things,

which was now removed from them though they were still alive. I will say more of this later.

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition V & VI § xii (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) p. 119; and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) p. 82.