



AS I CHINKED SHARDS OF BRICK and concrete into the cavity beneath the driveway, I hoped that Woody had made a back door for himself.

The point of the larger project was to reroute water coming out of the rain gutters from spilling out onto the drive to a new below-ground drain. For this I had to remove a section of decking, then dig a foot-deep trench from the foundation of the garage out to where the water could spill harmlessly onto the slope leading down to the pond. Once the trench was dug, I first covered the bottom with a layer of river rock, then laid in seventeen feet of drainage tiling covered in landscape fabric. More river rock went in to completely cover the tiling, then the trench was backfilled with soil.

This project was a perfect opportunity to do something about Woody. Our resident woodchuck had (as others before him) taken refuge beneath our deck and excavated a home beneath the paved portion

of our drive—to the extent that over the years the slab of concrete has sunk, tipping toward the back slope. Now, normal country folk would have long ago routed out the fellow, dispatching him without mercy, and repaired the damage to their property.

For better or worse, we are not normal country folk.

No, instead we gave the husky rodent a name.

That is not to say, however, that we couldn't do something to encourage him to set up his household somewhere other than beneath our drive. And this tiling project had the side benefit of giving me easy access to Woody's front door.



No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

A woodchuck (or groundhog) will always create one or more back doors to his burrow—escape hatches to be used in case of emergency. And as I chinked in rock to block his front door I hoped that Woody had indeed performed this necessary task, so he could escape by other means. And out of His love and mercy, God has done much the same thing for His children.

It is easy for an uninformed world to think of Father God as some high and mighty, unflinching, unfeeling potentate—someone who considers mankind only in the aggregate, lumped together in one clumsy, misshapen mass. That, however, is just one more lie from the father of lies: Satan.

The truth is that God the Father—that is not just a ceremonial title—knows each one of His children with the same attentive intimacy with which a loving human father knows *his* children. And His knowledge of each one of us extends to knowing our breaking point—which is different for each person.

God is not the author of temptation, nor does he inflict it on His children.

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

*James 1:13*

God permits, however (just as He did with His own Son), the scouring action of trials and temptation to bring us to maturity.

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

*James 1:12*

A truly loving father will not shield his children from hard times, but will recognize their value in training up a child for responsible adulthood. Likewise Father God does not shield us from all trials and temptations to evil because He knows that we gain maturity through our response.

But every person has his breaking point—the point at which a temptation becomes too much to bear, the point at which every personal defense breaks down and we are left at the mercy of the temptation’s author.

...who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape...

For every temptation each child of God confronts, He supplies a back door—a means of escape. And what is it? Who knows. Because the Father knows each of us intimately (more intimately than we know ourselves), that back door is different for each person, and perhaps different for each temptation.

Whatever the *mechanical* means of escape, however, they all reduce down to one common *spiritual* means:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

*Galatians 5:16-17*

Every means of escape from every temptation always involves the Spirit of God working in a life. The more integrated the Spirit, the easier the egress—the easier it is to back out of a situation intended for our harm.



Unless there is within us that which is above us,  
we shall soon yield to that which is about us.

P. T. Forsyth

