

Only Being One of Us Would Do

Want to Reach Birds? You May Need to be a Bird

I was planning to write, this month, about the Incarnation, and why it was needed (this was intended to compliment my *Anything but a good man*, which, though written a few years' ago, still seems to me to be an accurate view). However, last week I heard a preacher's story which I thought very helpful, and well worth sharing (most preachers' illustrative tales have been told and borrowed and repeated many times, I fancy). It concerns birds.

There was a man who was very sceptical about Jesus's Incarnation, and thus about much regarding Christianity. One night alone at home, he heard a frantic scratching noise at his window. He looked outside, and saw a flock of birds trying to shelter from a terrible storm, cold winds, and hard rain. He wondered how he could help them, and then realised that the best thing was to find them a place of shelter, and get them into it. Fortunately, he had a large shed, which was dry and unaffected by the wind and cold. But how to get them there? First, he tried shoing them in, he waved a newspaper, and other things to move them in the right direction – but not for a moment did they begin to go where he wanted. Then, he tried to lay a trail of corn that led from where they were flapping about, wearying and tiring, to the cosy shed. Still no result, no movement at all in the direction of shelter. How could they be influenced, who might they follow? Finally, he thought, they'd follow a creature like themselves, go where *it* would go ... if *only*, for a short while, he could, himself, be a bird ... Later, reflecting on that night, he thought he'd begun to know something about the necessity of the Incarnation.

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