

Many years ago at the children's Christmas Eve service at my first church, another St. Andrew's, the children built the crèche, placing all the characters in their places. They put one of the animals at the manger, feeding. Members of the Altar Guild wanted to "fix" the scene the children had created, but I asked them to leave it just as the children imagined it. Reflecting on whether this might actually have happened, in my sanctified imagination, I can see Joseph trying to shoo the animals away from Jesus, but Mary saying to leave them. Could it be that Mary thought that he was born for all of us and all the animals too. We know that Jesus would grow up to be the Good Shepherd for all of creation.

When I was a child there was a really big stained glass picturing – a larger than life sized Jesus as the Good Shepherd surrounded by all kinds of large and small animals. This window over the altar showed a blond Jesus with blue eyes. Jesus looked like me. Of course, we know in that part of the world the people did not – and still do not – look like me. There is a song that James Taylor sings that I really love.

Some children see Him lily white,  
The baby Jesus born this night.  
Some children see Him lily white,  
With tresses soft and fair.  
Some children see Him bronzed and brown,  
The Lord of heav'n to earth come down.  
Some children see Him bronzed and brown,  
With dark and heavy hair.

Some children see Him almond-eyed,  
This Savior whom we kneel beside.  
Some children see Him almond-eyed,  
With skin of golden hue.  
Some children see Him dark as they,  
Sweet Mary's Son to whom we pray.  
Some children see him dark as they,  
And, oh they love Him, too!

The children in each different place  
Will see the baby Jesus' face  
Like theirs, but bright with heavenly grace,  
And filled with holy light.  
O lay aside each earthly thing  
And with thy heart as offering,  
Come worship now the infant King.  
'Tis love that [was born last night]!

Songwriters: A. Burt / W. Hutson  
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