A PREACHER'S WIFE

I wouldn't be a preacher's wife.
I simply couldn't do it.
It takes too much to qualify,
And I'm not equal to it.

Now, this is no aspersion,
No play at being smart.
It's just—twixt "Reverend" and his wife—
Hers is the harder part.

Indeed, it's hard to please a crowd,
To charm a state or nation.
But harder still, you must agree,
To suit a congregation.

The wife may be discreet and mild:
This the complaint, "She's slow."
And if she's active and alert,
They gripe: "She hogs the show."

If she dress plain: "We pay enough
To buy her decent clothes."
But if she dons the latest mode:
"That's where our money goes!"

(Continued)
Wife has to be polite and kind
To everyone she meets...
Be it in church or palace ground
Or on the city streets.

She judges friend and enemy
With charity and calm
Because she knows just which is which,
The poison and the balm.

Her children must be faultless.
Every little prank they do
Is magnified a hundred times,
Exposed to public view.

And there are times she does without
That "Rev" be fitly dressed,
For surely he must make appearance
Equal to the rest.

She cries "Amen" at sermon peak,
Be it commonplace or grand.
She must be axle grease to wheel
'Tis plain to understand.

(Continued)
And when the members praise her mate
Enough to swell his head,
She longs to caution, but is forced
To hold her peace instead.

And when again she sees him toil
With scant appreciation,
She hides her own heartbreak to give
Him words of consolation.

Indeed, the time is far too brief
Her virtues to relate
And for the years of constancy
Fully compensate.

So ... for the crown that preachers get
When they depart this life . . .
I plead, "Do make it double, please,
For one is due his wife."

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