Mary Durbin (1752–86) was the eldest daughter of Henry Durbin (1718–99), an apothecary in Bristol, and his wife Hester (Thrilby) Durbin (d. 1759). They were member of the Baldwin Street religious society even before John Wesley’s first participation in the revival in Bristol, and became early members in the Wesleyan work there, with Henry serving as a trustee of the New Room chapel. They were also close friends with Charles and Sarah Wesley during their years in Bristol.

Mary Durbin married John Horton on September 21, 1780. John Wesley performed the service (see his Journal entry for the day). The closeness of Charles Wesley to the family, and his respect for Mary’s exemplary Christian life is evident in the verse he wrote on the occasion of her death, just six years into her married life. Charles composed first a single hymn and a brief epitaph (draft 1 below). Sometime later he revised the initial hymn, extending it into a five-part tribute, which exists both in a rough working form (draft 2 below) and a polished form (draft 3 below).

The aftermath of Mary’s death created a situation involving her sister, Hester Durbin, that Charles also found himself compelled to address—see MS Hester Durbin.

All three drafts of Wesley’s hymn on the death of Mary Horton are part of the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre. The transcriptions below are provided with permission of the Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester.

(The drafts are presented in consecutive order—draft 2 beginning on overall page 5; draft 3 on overall page 15).

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1This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: November 23, 2021.
On the Death of Mrs Horton
May 4, 1786
[draft 1]

[1.] It is the Lord, whose will is done!
Jehovah hath requir’d his Loan,
Jesus hath claim’d his bride!
Who went her mansion to prepare,
Hath brought her home, his joy to share,
And triumph at his side.

2. Her mourning days are ended soon,
Her Sun of life is set at noon;
Yet why should we complain
That Mercy hath abridg’d her years,
And snatch’d her from our vale of tears,
In endless Bliss to reign?

3. To keep her here in vain we strove:
She mounts! she claps her wings above!
She grasps the glittering Prize!
In answer to our mended prayers,
Enjoying, with salvation’s Heirs,
The life that never dies!

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1MARC, DDCW 3/9 (looseleaf unnumbered pages). Appears also in drafts 2 & 3 (below). The most extended version was published posthumously in Poetical Works, 6:356–63.
4. And can we now our Loss regret,
    Or wish to tear her from her seat,
    Where high enthroned she sings?
    No: rather let us strive t’ increase
    That multitude of witnesses,
    Whom Death to Glory brings.

5. Pursuing Her, as She her Lord,
    And labouring for a full reward,
    Our Friend we soon shall join;
    The praise of our salvation give
    To Him that doth for ever live,
    And to the Lamb Divine.

6. Hastning the universal Doom,
    When wilt Thou, Lord, thy power assume,
    In majesty come down?
    The number of Thy saints compleat,
    And us thro’ faith and patience meet,
    With joy eternal crown!
Epitaph

A meek and lowly Follower of the Lamb,
She more than conquer’d all in Jesus name,
Wash’d in his blood, and kept her garments white,
And blameless walk’d in her Redeemer’s sight,
Till fill’d with Love she fainted on his breast,
And found within his arms her everlasting Rest!

2Published posthumously in Poetical Works, 8:437; and Representative Verse, 375.
On the Death of
Mrs. Mary Horton, May 4, 1786,
Aged 34 year[s], a month, and 11 days.¹
[draft 2]

[1.]

[1.] It is the Lord, whose will is done!
He to the end hath loved his own,²
And now requir’d³ his Bride;
Who went, her mansion to prepare,
Hath brought her home, his joy to share,
And triumph at his side.

2. Her mourning days are ended⁴ soon,
Her sun of life gone down⁵ at noon;
But⁶ why shoud we complain
That Mercy hath abridg’d her years,
And snatch’d her from our vale of tears
In endless bliss to reign?

3. To keep her here in vain we strove;
She mounts! she claps her wings above!
She grasps the glittering prize!
In answer to our mended prayers,
Injoying with salvation’s heirs
The life that never dies!

4. And can we now our Loss regret,
Or wish to tear her from her seat,

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¹MARC, accession number MA 1977/583/19 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 4). Appears also in draft 1 (above) and draft 3 (below). Published posthumously in Poetical Works, 6:356–63.
²Ori., “Jehovah hath revok’d his Loan” changed to “He to the end hath loved his own.”
³Ori., “Jesus hath claim’d” changed to “And now requir’d.”
⁴“Ended” has “finish’d” written above it as an alternative.
⁵Ori., “is set” changed to “gone down.”
⁶Ori., “Yet.”
Where high-inthron’d she sings?
No: rather let us strive t’ increase
The Cloud of Jesus’ Witnesses,
Whom Death to Glory brings.

5. Pursuing Her, as She her Lord,
   And labouring for a full reward,
   Our Friend we soon shall join;
   The praise of our salvation give
   To Him that doth for ever live,
   And to the Lamb Divine.

6. Hastning the universal doom,
   O wou’dst Thou, Lord, thy power assume
   And bring the kingdom down,
   The number of thy saints compleat,
   And us, thro’ patient faith made’ meet,
   With joy eternal crown.

II.

[1.] O that our residue of days
   We all might spend in prayer, and praise
   For our Translated Friend,
   Contemplating her Converse here,
   Her Course of piety sincere,
   And her consistent End!

7Ori., “faith and patience” changed to “patient faith made.”
2. Her Piety with life begun,
   Servant of the God unknown
   She trembled, and ador’d,
   Kept by her Parents hallow’d cares
   From sin, the world, and Satan’s snares,
   And nurtur’d for the Lord.

3. While only led by purest* grace,
   Even she walk’d in pleasant ways,11
   Far from the thoughtless crowd
   A stranger to their hopes and fears,
   Remem’ring in her tenderest12 years
   Her Maker and her God.

4. In wisdom as in years She grew,
   Nor selfish guile, or evil knew,
   Or gay diversion’s round:
   Like Eve in her Creator’s Sight,
   Her pure, and innocent delight
   She in a garden found.

5. Her precious time employing there
   In useful works, and praise, and prayer,
   She priz’d her happy Lot;
   Her cup of earthly bliss ran o’er,
   Yet still she sigh’d for something more
   And sought She knew not what.

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8Ori., “A Follower.”
9Ori., “tenderest.”
10Ori., “Upheld by unresisted grace.” Next changed to “Prevented and restrained by grace,” and finally changed to “While only led by purest grace.” The word “purest” is quite uncertain; Wesley may have been searching for a shortened form of “prevenient” In the margin he suggests in shorthand the alternative line (adopted in draft 3) “Allur’d by his prevenient grace.”
11Ori., “She walk’d in quiet, pleasant ways” changed to “Even she walk’d in pleasant ways.”
12Ori., “earliest.”
6. She knew not, till the God unknown
   Had drawn her, weary, to his Son,
   The Lord her righteousness,
   Who paid her ransom on the tree,
   From all iniquity to free
   And save a world by grace.

7. Jesus beneath the figtree saw
   His handmaid, labouring by the law
   Herself to justify,
   And show’d Himself the Way to God,
   And graciously the Gift bestow’d
   Which she could never buy.

8. The harmless youth* who freely loved
   Her sincerity approv’d,
   And touch’d her simple heart;
   She then with Lydia’s ease believ’d,
   A pardon seal’d with joy receiv’d
   And Mary’s better part.

9. Yet tho† she chiefly chose to sit
   Transported at the Master’s feet,
   And listening to his word,
   She ran the way of his commands
   And ministred with Martha’s hands
   To all that serv’d her Lord.

* Mark 10:21
† in the Gospel

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13 Ori., “while.”
10. Her genuine faith by works was known,
   Her light with spreading lustre shone\textsuperscript{14}
   Impartial\textsuperscript{15} unconfin’d;
   Her meat and drink his will to do,
   And trace his steps, and close pursue
   The Friend of humankind.

III.

[1.] Say, ye companions of her youth
   With what alacrity\textsuperscript{16} and truth,
   How free from fear, or shame,
   Christ, and his members she confess’d,
   And thro’ a blameless life express’d
   The tempers of the Lamb.

2. How did she put his bowels on,
   And answer every plaintive groan
   Of poverty and pain!
   In sad variety of grief
   The Wretched sought from Her relief,
   Nor ever sought in vain.

3. She flew, preventing their request,
   To seek, and succour the distrest,
   The reconciling word.

\textsuperscript{14} Ori., “Her growing light impartial shone” changed to “Her light with growing lustre shone.” Next, “growing” is replaced with “gradual.” Finally, Wesley suggests “spreading” as an alternative in shorthand; this suggestion is adopted in draft 3.

\textsuperscript{15} Ori., “As pure as.” Next changed to “And pure as,” and finally changed to “Impartial.”

\textsuperscript{16} Ori., “simplicity.” While Wesley does not cross out “alacrity,” he suggests immediately after it the alternative “sincerity” in shorthand. This alternative is adopted in draft 3.
The balm of Gilead to pour in,
Comfort, and sooth the bruised by sin,
And lead them to her Lord.

4. Guide to her Natural Allies,
Indear’d yet more by gracious ties,
She stirr’d them up17 to show
Their faith by every righteous deed,
And in the shining Steps18 to tread
Of God reveal’d below.

5. From them who did her Father’s will
A thought she knew not to conceal,
Incapable of art,
Blest with a child’s simplicity,
While cheerful as the light and free
She pour’d out all her heart.20

6. When call’d the Mystery to explain
Of Two in Christ, no longer twain,
An emblem of21 his Bride,
The meaning of the Nuptial Sign
The bond of charity22 Divine
She show’d exemplified.

17 Ori., “urged them on” changed to “stirr’d them up.”
18 Ori., “And close in all the Steps” changed to “And in the shining Steps.”
19 Ori., “them who did their” changed to “them who did her,” with “those that” written above “them who” as an alternative.
20 Wesley originally wrote a new stanza 5 in the margin, but crossed it out. The replacement stanza appears in shorthand in the margin and longhand on page 10 of the manuscript, numbered to show that it was to be inserted here. For continuity, we have moved stanza 5 to this location and renumbered the stanzas that follow to fit, also moving one stanza onto the next page. The original stanza 5 that Wesley wrote but crossed out is as follows (including strikeouts, and a replacement in the margin):

Witness her zeal, ye happy few,
Whom as her bosom friends she knew
Free from reserve and art
Did she not chear and bless your sight,
Her spirit open as the light,
And pure her childlike heart!

21 Ori., “Of Jesus and”; changed to “A type”; then to “An emblem of.”
22 Ori., “bond of perfectness” changed to “bond of charity,” with “truth” written above “bond” as an alternative.
7. To whom her plighted faith she gave
She with intire affection clave,
Nor e’er resum’d a part,
Yet Jesus above all ador’d,
Still rendring to her heavenly Lord
An undivided heart.

8. When God, to prove her faith sincere,
A Sacrifice than life more dear,
Did for her children call,
Her children freely she resign’d,
Bereav’d, yet happy still to find
That Christ was all in all.

IV.

[1.] She thus, adorning every state,
Did with his true disciples wait
The Saviour from above:
Death could not find her off her guard,
By prayer habitually prepar’d
By humble, active love.

2. Her life a testimony true
That heaven was always in her view,
Till earthly scenes were past,
That here she had not long to stay,
Who lived as every well-spent day
Were destin’d for her last.

3. Ready for her celestial home,
Whene’er the messenger should come,
Her Lord was sure to find
His handmaid in his work employ’d,
Who long had giv’n up all for God,
And cast the world behind.

23 Ori., “But.”
24 Ori., “And.”
25 “Bridegroom” is written in the margin, most likely as an alternative to “Saviour.”
26 Ori., “her.”
4. Unwarn’d of her release so near,
   Insensible of pain, or fear
   She needed not to know
   The moment fixt for her remove;
   She coud not doubt her Saviour’s love
   Or dread a stingless foe.

5. The tyrant was not worth a thought,
   When Christ had her salvation wrought
   And wholly sanctified,
   When (half her race of glory run)
   He sent Elijah’s chariot down,
   He came to fetch his bride.

6. Like Moses caught to his embrace
   Dissolv’d by his Discover’d Face,
   Whom only she desir’d,
   The race she in a moment won,
   And calm, without a lingering groan
   In Jesus sight expir’d.

7. Yet mindful of her friends below,
   Stronger than death her love to show,
   By a divine decree
   Indulg’d to comfort them that mourn’d
   She stopt her flaming car, and turn’d
   And shouted VICTORY!

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27 Ori., “dissolution” changed to “her release so.”
28 Ori., “arms.”
V.

[1.] O God, who dost the victory give,
The thanks of every heart receive,
   Thro’ thy beloved Son,
Who dost, for our Redeemer’s sake,
Vile, sinful worms vouchsafe to make
   The partners\textsuperscript{29} of thy throne.

2. The grace which sav’d our happy Friend
   Which made her faithful to the end,
   And deck’d her head with rays,
We shall for us sufficient prove
   And strive in humble fear and love
   To perfect holiness.

3. Who did for Her the kingdom buy,
   Jesus for us went up on high
   Our purchas’d thrones to claim:
The same our Advocate with Thee
   The same our trust thy face to see
   Thro’ that almighty Name.

4. Father, we on that Name depend:
   Send then, for us the Convoy send,
   For all with Jesus One
Consummate us\textsuperscript{30} in endless bliss,
   And by thy glorious Saints increase
   The glory of thy Son.

\textsuperscript{29}Ori., “Partakers” changed to “The partners.”

\textsuperscript{30}Ori., “Consummated” changed to “Consummate us.”
Epitaph.\textsuperscript{31}

A meek and lowly Follower of the Lamb,
She more than conquer’d all thro’ Jesus Name,
Wash’d in his blood, and kept her garments white,
And blameless walk’d in her Redeemer’s sight,
Till fill’d with love, she fainted on his breast,
And found within his\textsuperscript{32} arms her everlasting Rest!

\textsuperscript{31}Published posthumously in \textit{Poetical Works}, 8:437; and \textit{Representative Verse}, 375.

\textsuperscript{32}Ori., “in Jesus” changed to “within his.”
On the Death of
Mrs Mary Horton,
May 4, 1786, Aged 34 years.¹
[draft 3]²

[I.]

[1.] It is the Lord—whose will is done!
He to the end hath loved his own,
And now requir’d his Bride;
Who went, her mansion to prepare,
Hath brought her home, his joy to share,
And triumph at his side.

2. Her mourning days are finish’d soon,
Her sun of life gone down at noon;
But why shoud we complain
That Mercy hath abridg’d her years,
And snatch’d her from our vale of tears
In endless bliss to reign?

3. To keep her here in vain we strove:
She mounts! she claps her wings above!
She grasps the glittering prize!
In answer to our mended prayers,
Injoying with salvation’s heirs
The life that never dies!

¹Appears also in drafts 1 & 2 (above). Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 6:356–63.

²This polished version of Wesley’s hymn on the death of Mary Horton was inscribed at the end of the notebook (with pages 6.25 x 7.5 inches in size) that Frank Baker designated “MS Death,” numbered separately from other parts of the notebook. The notebook is part of the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/578 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 3). At some point the hymn immediately following this one in MS Death (for John Henderson) was cut out of the notebook, taking with it on the opening page the epitaph for Mary Horton (see MS Henderson for details). We have restored the epitaph to its original location in this transcription.
4. And can we now our Loss regret,
   Or wish to tear her from, her seat,
       Where high-inthron’d she sings?
   No: rather let us strive t’ increase
   The Cloud of Jesus witnesses,
       Whom Death³ to Glory brings.

5. Pursuing Her, as She her Lord,
   And labouring for a full reward,
       Our Friend we soon shall join,
   The praise of our Salvation give
   To Him that doth for ever live,
       And to the Lamb Divine.

6. Hastning the universal doom,
   O woudst Thou, Lord, thy power assume,
       And bring the kingdom down,
   The number of thy saints compleat,
   And us, thro’ patient faith made meet,
       With joy eternal crown!

II.

[1.] O that our residue of days
   We all might spend in prayer, and praise
       For our Translated Friend,

³Ori., “go.”
Contemplating her Converse here,
Her Course of Piety sincere,
   And her consistent End!

2. Her Piety with life begun,
Worshipper of the God unknown,
    She trembled, and ador’d;
Kept by her Parents hallow’d cares
From sin, the world, and Satan’s snares,
    And nurtur’d for the Lord.

3. Allur’d by his prevenient grace,
Even she walk’d in pleasant ways,
    Far from the thoughtless crowd,
A stranger to their hopes and fears,
Remembring in her tenderest years
    Her Maker, and her God.

4. In wisdom as in years she grew,
Nor selfish guile, nor evil knew,
    Nor gay Diversion’s round:
Like Eve in her Creator’s sight,
Her innocent, and pure delight
    She in a Garden found.
5. Her precious hours employing there
In useful works, and praise, and prayer
She priz’d her happy lot;
Her cup of earthly bliss run o’re;
Yet still she sigh’d for something more,
And sought she knew not what.

6. She knew not; till the God unknown
Had drawn her, weary, to his Son,
The Lord her Righteousness,
Who paid her ransom on the tree,
From all iniquity to free,
And save a world by grace.

7. Jesus beneath the fig-tree saw
His Handmaid labouring by the law
Herself to justify,
And show’d Himself the WAY to God,
And graciously the Gift bestow’d
Which she could never buy.

8. The harmless youth who freely loved, +
HE her sincerity approv’d,
And touch’d her simple heart;

+ In the Gospel, Mark 10:21.
She then with Lydia’s ease believ’d,
A pardon seal’d with joy receiv’d,
And Mary’s better part.

9. Yet tho’ her Choice was still to sit
   Delighted at the Master’s feet
   And listening to his word,
She ran the way of his commands,
And ministred with Martha’s hands
   To all that serv’d her Lord.

10. Her genuine faith by works was known
    Her light with spreading lustre shone
    Impartial, unconfin’d,
    Her meat and drink his will to do,
    And trace his steps, and close pursue
    The Friend of human kind.

III.

[1.] Say, ye Companions of her youth,
   With what sincerity and truth,
   How free from fear and shame,
Christ and his members she confess’d,
And thro’ a blameless life exprest*
   The tempers of the Lamb.

*Ori., “confess’d.”
2. How did she put his bowels on,
   And answer every plaintive groan
   Of poverty, and pain!
   In sad variety of grief
   The wretched sought from Her relief,
   Nor ever sought in vain.

3. She flew, preventing their request,
   To seek, and succour the distrest,
   The reconciling Word,
   The balm of Gilead to pour in,
   Comfort, and sooth the Bruised by sin,
   And lead them to their Lord.

4. Guide to her natural Allies,
   Endear’d yet more by gracious ties
   She urg’d them on to show
   Their faith by every righteous deed,
   And close in all the steps to tread
   Of God reveal’d below.

5. From Those who did her Father’s will
   A thought she knew not to conceal,
   Incapable of art,
   Blest with a child’s simplicity,
   While cheerful as the light, and free
   She pour’d out all her heart.
6. When call’d the mystery to explain
   Of Two in Christ, no longer twain,
   A figure of his Bride
   The meaning of the Nuptial Sign
   The sacred Ordinance divine,
   She show’d exemplified.

7. To whom her plighted faith she gave
   She with intire affection clave
   Nor e’er resum’d a part,
   Yet Jesus above all ador’d,
   Still rendring to her heavenly Lord
   An undivided heart.

8. When God, to prove her faith[^] sincere
   A sacrifice than life more dear
   Did for her children call,
   Her children freely she resign’d,
   Bereav’d, yet happy still to find
   That Christ was all in all!

IV.

[1.] She thus, adorning every state,
   Did with his true disciples wait
   The Saviour from above:

[^]: “Love” is written above “faith” as an alternative.
Death could not find her off her guard,
By prayer habitually prepar’d,
By humble, active love.

2. Her life a testimony true
That heaven was always in her view,
Till earthly scenes were past,
That here she had not long to stay,
Who lived, as every well-spent day
Were destin’d for her last.

3. Ready for her celestial home,
Whene’er the messenger shoud come,
Her Lord was sure to find
His handmaid in his work employ’d,
Who long had given up all for God,
And cast the world behind.

4. Unwarn’d of her release so near,
Insensible of pain, or fear,
She needed not to know
The moment fixt for her remove:
She could not doubt her Saviour’s love
Or dread a stingless foe.

5. The tyrant was not worth a thought,
When Christ had her salvation wrought,
Had wholly sanctified,
When (half her race of glory run)
He sent Elijah’s chariot down,
He came to fetch his bride.

6. Like Moses, caught to his embrace,
   Dissolv’d by his discover’d face,
   Whom only she desir’d,
The race she in a moment won,
   And calm, without a lingring groan
   In Jesus Sight expir’d!

7. Yet mindful of her Friends below,
   Stronger than death her love to show,
   By a divine decree
   Indulg’d to comfort them that mourn’d,
   She stopt her flaming Car, and turn’d,
   And shouted VICTORY!

   V.

[1.] O God, who dost the victory give,
The thanks of every heart receive,
   Thro’ thy beloved Son,
Who dost, for our Redeemer’s sake
Vile, sinful worms vouchsafe to make
The partners of thy throne.

2. The grace which saved our happy Friend,
Which made her faithful to the end,
And deck’d her head with rays,
We shall for us sufficient prove,
And strive in humble fear and love
To perfect holiness.

3. Who did for Her the kingdom buy
Jesus for us went up on high,
Our purchas’d thrones to claim;
The same our Advocate with Thee
The same our Trust thy Face to see
Thro’ that Almighty Name.

4. Father, we on that Name depend:
Send then for us the Convoy send,
For all with Jesus One,
Consummate us in heavenly bliss,
And by thy glorious Saints increase
The Glory of thy Son.
Epitaph.\textsuperscript{5}
[On Mrs Horton. 1786.]

A meek and lowly follower of the Lamb,
She more than conquer'd all thro' Jesus Name,
Wash'd in his blood, and kept her garments white,
And blameless walk'd in her Redeemer's sight
Till fill'd with love, she fainted on his breast,
And found within his Arms her Everlasting Rest.

\textsuperscript{5}Restored from MS Henderson (see details there). Published posthumously in \textit{Poetical Works}, 8:437; and \textit{Representative Verse}, 375.