

FROM PLOUGHING THE WILDERNESS TO HEDGING THE  
VINEYARD: MEANINGS AND USES OF HUSBANDRY AMONG  
QUAKERS, C. 1650–C. 1860\*

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ABSTRACT

The parable of the husbandman was of great significance to Protestants of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for many early modern religious groups developed aspects of their beliefs and identities through its interpretation. This article considers the ways in which representations of the husbandman differed between Friends and other Protestants, and particularly evolved within Quakerism from the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. It considers broad shifts, starting from the desire to cultivate the literal and spiritual wilderness described by George Fox, and culminating in the need for spiritual husbandmen to maintain the protective 'hedge' and keep the existing stock, particularly Friends' children, safe from intrusion.

KEYWORDS

spiritual husbandry, husbandman, plain testimony, tithing testimony, Besse, hedge

According to St Matthew's Gospel:

There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit grew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and

will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.<sup>1</sup>

The parable of the husbandman was of great significance to Quakers and other Protestants of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for both explicitly and implicitly, many early modern religious groups developed aspects of their beliefs and identities through its interpretation. This article considers the ways in which representations of the husbandman differed between Friends and other Protestants, and particularly evolved within Quakerism between the 1650s and the mid-nineteenth century. It considers the work of, among others, Laura Brace, and attempts to add to her analysis of the significance of husbandry to seventeenth-century Friends' opposition to tithes,<sup>2</sup> by examining the relationship of the figure of the husbandman to Friends' plain testimony. The trope was especially important to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century male Quaker identity and self-representation in journals and in published accounts of sufferings. However, during the first two centuries of Quakerism, changes in the social, economic and geographic composition of the Religious Society of Friends made the term less directly applicable to individual Members. Arguably this led to a more spiritual and less literal meaning for the term 'husbandry', but the hope remained that some Quakers should be countrymen. Such changes reflect broader shifts in Quakerism, moving from the desire to cultivate the literal and spiritual wilderness described by George Fox, to the need for spiritual husbandmen to help maintain the existing stock and keep it safe from intrusion.

#### PRE-QUAKER ROOTS

Husbandry had been spiritually significant to Protestants from at least the early sixteenth century: in the 1529 Lutheran work, *A proper dialoge betwene a Gentillman and an Husbandman*, the hardworking, impoverished husbandman claims that clergy have raised rents and demanded tithes which have reduced farmers to beggars,<sup>3</sup> and which are also illicit, as Christ 'came of the lynage of Iuda/to which lyn was no tythes graunted'.<sup>4</sup> This work, possibly edited by William Tyndale,<sup>5</sup> was influenced by earlier Lollard works, which also criticised the clergy's claim for tithes on biblical grounds at the same time as demanding the Bible in the vernacular. The call to read the Word of God in their own language, alongside the allegation that tithes were pauperizing farmers, unites the economic and spiritual demands represented in these works and provides an early example of the husbandman as both spiritual and social champion of Protestantism.

Economic change during the same century, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor believe, allowed 'the ordering of a wide landscape to become frequent...on aesthetic or productive grounds' while the cultivated landscape became a key metaphor 'in the intersecting realms of national, religious, and individual identity', as captured in the word 'country'.<sup>6</sup> By the early seventeenth century, technological and economic developments in agriculture had led to 'the rise of the English husbandry manual', dependent also on the revival of classical texts.<sup>7</sup> Andrew McRae has suggested that the term 'improvement' used in the discussions of husbandry during the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries drew together economic, but also legal and moral, implications.<sup>8</sup> By the seventeenth century the definition of the term 'improve' included 'to inclose and cultivate (waste land); ...to make land more valuable or better by such means'.<sup>9</sup> Agrarian improvement, then, was impelled by a sense of moral duty to exploit more efficiently the natural world. Arguably, Friends believed that spiritual husbandry and improvement could do much the same for a country of souls. Some early Friends may have been able to read the literature of husbandry, which its authors often claimed was written for 'the honest plaine English Husbandman'.<sup>10</sup> These, like the earlier Lutheran work, idealised 'playne men of the Countrie'<sup>11</sup> and may also have provided some of the inspiration for Quaker self-representation in later decades. Indeed, Gervase Markham's twin volumes *The English Husbandman* and *The English Housewife*, of 1613 and 1615 respectively, stressed the necessity of godliness, plainness, cleanliness and temperance in men and women. He further viewed the husbandman's labours as 'most excellent...to be a Husbandman is to be a good man', even 'a Master of the Earth, turning sterillitie and barrainness into Fruitfulnesse and increase'.<sup>12</sup> In parallel to this, the husbandman's wife was to be 'a women of great modesty and temperance' wearing 'comely, cleanly and strong' garments, 'without toyish garnishes, or the gloss of light colours'.<sup>13</sup> Similarities between the mores expressed in Markham's works and the plain testimony of later Friends may suggest the possible influence of similar works on the nascent Quaker movement. Peter Collins has considered the extent to which plain style was 'extant as an influential discourse long before George Fox' in the Classical tradition of rhetoric, of which the plaining of Quakers forms a part.<sup>14</sup> However, Margaret Fell and George Fox both criticised Friends who used plainness as a form of ornamentation as it contradicted Pauline ideals of simplicity, and valued the kernel over the husk, which itself was 'a key metaphor in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.<sup>15</sup> Plain clothing was, though, still a key element in Quaker rejection of superfluity, and the difficulties of maintaining this testimony as many Quakers grew in wealth and status during the eighteenth century may, it will be suggested, have influenced the desire to maintain the image of spiritual and literal husbandry, including the protective 'hedge'. As Collins asks, '[c]learly "the simple life" is a relative term. Did wealthy Quaker capitalists consider their relatively luxurious lifestyle simple?'<sup>16</sup> Another question might be: Did the temptations of urban living lead such Quakers to maintain husbandry as an ideal of 'the simple life'? If, as Collins argues, plaining is 'a socially learned cognitive achievement: anything can be plained' then an occupation could be plained, giving it 'theological, political and ethical as well as aesthetic potential'.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE REFORMATION OF HUSBANDRY

Later in the same century, and especially during the social upheaval of the Civil Wars, increasing interest in the spiritual and literal cultivation of the nation led to the publication and dissemination of a number of works linking husbandry to Protestantism at the same time as early Friends began to meet, preach and publish the first

Quaker tracts. The absence, until relatively recently, of recognition that the reformation of husbandry was part of a desire on the part of several writers for a far broader spiritual reformation has been commented upon by historians such as Leslie, who notes that '[m]odern accounts of seventeenth-century husbandry are often remarkable for what they omit'.<sup>18</sup> However, more recent accounts of the period have taken this into consideration, although the effect of such works in later decades, specifically upon the early Quaker movement, has been little considered.

The Commonwealth years have been represented as a period in which 'the cultivation of the land could be undertaken in a spirit of religious hopefulness'.<sup>19</sup> This disposition was shared by several writers, including Abraham Cowley, whose work was acknowledged by Friends and will be considered further shortly. As we have already seen, husbandry was linked by some writers to the godly employment of cultivating the earth. During the Interregnum, this began to be applied to the spiritual cultivation of the people. Ralph Austen's parallel works *A Treatise of Fruit-Trees* and *The Spirituall Use of an Orchard* (1653) were intended by the author to be published together, so the first work should lead readers to consider the second.<sup>20</sup> Samuel Hartlib, whose agricultural correspondence considered human intervention in the natural world through horticulture, described in *A discoverie for division or setting out of land* (1653) the ideal estate: 'Your house...in the middle of all your little world...enclosed with gardens and orcheyards...& all bound together as with a girdle', around which should be grown 'a cloak of meadow and tillage'.<sup>21</sup> John Dixon Hunt believes this proposes a hierarchy of spaces where those areas nearest the house demonstrate the labour and greatest aesthetic delight.<sup>22</sup> While this served 'to educate men and women...to appreciate the ideal perfection of God's handiwork in the larger world of nature',<sup>23</sup> it arguably also encouraged spiritual seclusion, protected by God's works and influenced by the reference in the parable to the 'hedging in' of the householder's land.

Of the 'Hartlib circle' of natural philosophers, both John Evelyn during the 1650s and Cowley shortly after the Restoration contemplated a 'select community who would withdraw from society to create a paradise garden' and 'explore the practical and spiritual possibilities of horticulture'.<sup>24</sup> Evelyn's belief in the usefulness of gardening and husbandry, as they were the main pre-lapsarian occupations, suggests to Parry a belief in the imminent restoration of the earthly paradise, and he sees the publication of several husbandry manuals in the 1650s as proof of this.<sup>25</sup> Leslie sees the frequent association of the figure of the husbandman to God or Christ as striking, and bound to the seventeenth-century concern with salvation and cultivation, as expressed by Walter Blith in his assertion that 'God was the Originall, and first Husbandman, the pattern of all Husbandry'.<sup>26</sup> However, this hardly seems surprising given the parable of the husbandman. Although it represents God as the owner of the vineyard, He must also have been the ultimate husbandman, cultivating land from the wilderness.<sup>27</sup> Early Quakers also used the parable, and may have done so far more in unrecorded preaching during the 1650s. Certainly, George Fox in *The Trumpet of the Lord Sounded* (1654) referred to biblical accounts such as the parable when he described his millenarian belief that 'the Lord is coming to look for fruit, see that your fruit be good'.<sup>28</sup> Further, he warned:

How! ye vine-dressers; how is the vineyard full of briers and thorns! Oh how is the vineyard full of dead trees...the pretended Dressers and Lookers to the vineyard are blinde, and do not know one tree from another...now is the Lord sending his sons and daughters, and servants into the vineyard.<sup>29</sup>

The radical Abiezer Coppe in *Some Sweet Sips* (1649) similarly 'commandeered the image' in his comments against tithes, claiming that the Lord would return to be the only husbandman, in contrast to the present land of bondage in which men had to labour on behalf of other men.<sup>30</sup> However, Fox developed his use of husbandry to form a spiritual metaphor, capable of saving souls, 'the epitome of an honest labourer working for God to improve both his own soul and the state of the nation'.<sup>31</sup> The seeds of the plain testimony may also be discerned in his condemnation of the superficiality of 'pretended Dressers and Lookers', in contrast to the Lord's servants. Fox also recalled in his *Journal* that upon arriving in Scotland in 1657 he felt that it suffered the curse of humanity after the Fall, having 'a bryarry brambly nature which is to bee burnt upp with Gods worde & plowed uppe with his spirituall plowe before Gods seed brings foorth heavenly & spirituall fruite... But ye husband man is to wait in patiens'.<sup>32</sup> In 1659 he put Quakers in the position of spiritual husbandmen, and wrote of Friends as having 'beheld the Nations as a wilderness untilled, and mens hearts as the fallow ground unbroken up, and not plowed nor sown with the good seed of Gods kingdom'.<sup>33</sup> This may suggest Friends' awareness of agricultural literature, as it seems a development of the attitudes of agricultural improvers towards the perceived wastefulness of common land left idle, especially when such land 'attracted a shifting, transient population' and adding to the reputation of such areas as places of 'lawlessness and drunken riot'.<sup>34</sup> In another work of the same year, he suggested that the clergy should lose their claim to tithes, forcing them to 'go out to get vineyards, and plant vineyards, and thresh, and plow in hope',<sup>35</sup> which some scholars see as containing 'the possibility of improvement which is central to the metaphor of husbandry', used by Quakers but also by those defending tithes.<sup>36</sup>

Other Friends, including James Nayler, used similar metaphors in the late 1650s. Nayler clearly aligned earthly rulers, and their slothful, sensual and therefore superfluous pleasure-seeking, with the wicked husbandmen of the parable when he stated, in a similar vein to Fox, that

Now is the Heir of Righteousness come to seek the fruit of his own... Did not he plant a Holy Vine to bring forth to himself of his own Nature and Image? And have you let this be over-run with Weeds, while you have been asleep in your Sloth and Idleness, Cares and Pleasures of the World, till all be filled with Bryars and Thorns, and corrupt Plants that are now spread and bring forth? And now the Lord is come who is the Light of the World, to seek Fruits of his own, and will you hold him forth these cursed Fruits...as though they were his...and fall violently upon him if he deny them?<sup>37</sup>

concluding that 'Now let the Wise in heart, who can discern the signs of the Times, read, if the Parable be not fulfilled upon you Husbandmen'. Just as spiritual corruption was represented by corrupt and unproductive plants, in another work Nayler likened spiritual awakening to a growing plant: 'and the Thirsty Soul became as a watered Garden'.<sup>38</sup> Here God is represented as the husbandman, although it is clear

from other works, such as Fox's, that Friends, living in a godly way, also viewed themselves as spiritual husbandmen, sowing the Seed through their preaching, a form of spiritual improvement. Indeed, the literal husbandman was also the preaching husbandman, as Richard Hubberthorne described. Likening himself to Old Testament prophets to justify his preaching, he wrote: 'Elisha was a ploughman... Amos was a herdsman... And I do witness the same call, who was a husbandman'.<sup>39</sup> Thirty years later, George Fox reiterated the right of all Friends to preach when moved to do so, irrespective of status, explaining that 'several of the Prophets...were Shepherds, Husband-men, and Trades-men... Despised and Persecuted by the world, and the Ministers of the Letter without Life'.<sup>40</sup>

#### POST-RESTORATION INFLUENCES

After the Restoration, Quaker writers seem to have become more influenced by existing works on husbandry. This may reflect socio-economic changes within Quakerism, as better-educated Friends began to exert greater influence. Published after the Restoration, but written during the Interregnum, the treatise *Rusticus ad Academicos* ('The Country Correcting the University and Clergy, etc.'), bridges the periods.<sup>41</sup> Directed against four eminent Puritan divines, Samuel Fisher stressed the importance of the Light of Christ in the conscience, and contrasted it to the insincerity of 'hireling priests'.<sup>42</sup> Although this was often a topic of early Quaker works,<sup>43</sup> the university education of the author and his use of Latin in the title of the work demonstrate both his background and that of a number of Friends whose influence is apparent after the Restoration. Indeed, his suggestion that the godly country could lead academics and clerics in the towns is arguably an early example of spiritual husbandry. Chambers has suggested that shortly after the Restoration, works such as Evelyn's *Sylva* offered 'a myth of patriotic husbandry to a country seeking to heal the wounds of division'<sup>44</sup> combined with advice on soil, sowing and orchards. Husbandry, then, could relate to topics outside the field.

Certainly, George Fox expected all Friends to labour 'in the thing that is good, which doth not spoil, nor destroy, nor waste the Creation'<sup>45</sup>, rejecting all superfluity. In his 1661 work *The Line of Righteousness*, he exhorted husbandmen in particular to

Do rightly, holily, justly, honestly, plainly and truly to all men... Deny your selves, and live in the Cross of Christ... So in all Husbandry, Speak Truth, act Truth, doing justly and uprightly in all your Actions, in all your Practices, in all your Words, in all your Dealings, Buyings, Sellings, Changings and Commerce.<sup>46</sup>

Husbandmen were to be visible representatives of, and models of morality for, all Friends, but it is difficult not to conclude that the figure would have been particularly applicable to male Friends. The reference to labouring to maintain the Creation may refer to the labour in which all Friends might participate: spiritual husbandry. Edward Burroughs too, when defending Friends' right to liberty of conscience in religious matters, argued that to persecute dissenters would 'unavoidably tend to destroy Trading, Husbandry, and Merchandize',<sup>47</sup> thereby stressing that its importance was equal to other major Quaker, and national, concerns. A direct

quotation from this work appears in the first full-length history of Quakerism by a Quaker, Willem Sewel's *The history of the rise, increase, and progress of the Christian people called Quakers* (1722). This suggests that Burrough's view of the significance of husbandry, both literal and spiritual, was still considered relevant sixty years later.

Non-Quaker writers also considered 'the Heavenly Use of Earthly Things' in the Restoration period. Works such as *Husbandry Spiritualiz'd* of 1669, by the Presbyterian divine John Flavell, represented the occupation of husbandry as ideal training for the introspection necessary to await the coming of Christ: 'If an Husbandman upon the ordinary principles of reason can wait for the Harvest, shall I not wait for the Coming of the Lord?'<sup>48</sup> The 'spiritualizing' of husbandry was intended to 'catch the Readers Soul' and direct rural workers away from 'obscene Ballads and filthy Songs, which corrupt their minds, and dispose them to much wickedness, by irritating their natural corruption!'<sup>49</sup> Fox's reference in his *Journal* to the need to prepare the ground for God's seed contrasts with writers such as Flavell, who was probably aware of Friends' use of the metaphor, as various controversial works passed between Quakers and Presbyterians from the early 1660s onwards, including some on the issue of tithes.<sup>50</sup> Flavell, then, inverted the metaphor in his *Husbandry Spiritualiz'd* by representing husbandmen as ripe for spiritual improvement.

Although Fox was not as explicit in his condemnation of popular entertainment, both Quakers and other Protestants intended husbandry to be both a literal and spiritual occupation. Flavell even asserted that ministers were 'Husbandmen in a figure', referring to entirely metaphorical husbandry.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the Anglican author of *The Duty of a Husbandman* (1703), who aimed to demonstrate that 'the Business of Husbandry may be improv'd to a Spiritual Advantage'<sup>52</sup> quoted at length from the parable of the husbandmen. For post-Restoration Anglicans, the parable served as justification for the clergy's claim to tithes, and Anglican spiritual writers such as this anonymous author defined husbandry as the ideal occupation before the Fall. The identification, in the work, of God as divine husbandman also suggests similar influences to those on Quaker writers. As we have seen, Friends such as Fox and Nayler saw Quakers as the new husbandmen who would use the divine vineyard, both literal and spiritual, in the best possible way. However, although the anonymous author also viewed the world as a vineyard, and the inhabitants as husbandmen, other elements of the interpretation differ greatly, as in many disputations between Friends and other Protestants.<sup>53</sup> Stating that he 'would have this Parable serve for the Instruction of a Religious Countryman',<sup>54</sup> the author's desire to use the parable to justify, among other things, the payment of tithes and reverence for the Anglican hierarchy soon becomes apparent. Describing tithes as a way to 'return Thanks' to God, as Cain had done, the donation of a tenth of produce is justified as a 'conscientious Duty' to a God who has not given, but has only let out, his land to husbandmen.<sup>55</sup> Tithes, then, seem almost to act as a form of rent. By extrapolating from the parable, the author also condemned those who abuse 'Gods servants, who are appointed to receive Tithes'.<sup>56</sup> Clearly, those such as Quakers, who refused to pay, were categorised as wicked husbandmen. In response to works such as these, Joseph Besse in a later decade asserted that there was 'no Parity of Reason between Tithes, and a Rent-Charge fixed upon Lands'.<sup>57</sup>

Cowley, the Cambridge-educated, sometime Royalist spy had written extensively on husbandry, and his posthumous collected *Works* of 1668, which include the essay 'Of Agriculture', contain his comment that '[t]he three first men in the world were a gardener, a ploughman, and a grazier; and if any man object that the second of these was a murderer, I desire he would consider, that as soon as he was so, he quitted our profession and turned builder'.<sup>58</sup> Cowley's works influenced William Penn significantly, and Penn's knowledge of them is apparent in the 1682 edition of *No Cross, No Crown*, in which Penn describes Cowley as 'a witty and ingenious man', and quotes almost all of Cowley's essay 'Of Avarice'.<sup>59</sup> Penn paraphrased Cowley's comment from 'Of Agriculture' in *Fruits of a Father's Love*, published posthumously in 1726, as 'When Cain became a Murderer, as a witty Man said, he turned a Builder of Cities, and quitted his Husbandry'.<sup>60</sup> When Penn advised his children, presumably his sons, to 'Chuse God's Trades before men's: Adam was a Gardiner, Cain a Plowman, and Abel a Grasier or Shepherd' he exhorted them to select those, such as husbandry – Cain's original occupation – which kept them close to God's creation, as they 'began with the World, and have least of Snare, and most of Use'.<sup>61</sup> They should also reject livings based around human creations which profited from luxury and superfluity. However, even in 1699, when Penn wrote his *Advice to his Children*, and certainly by the time it was published in 1726,<sup>62</sup> a large proportion of English Friends lived in urban areas, and were engaged in work which differed from Penn's rural ideals.

Perhaps, then, Fox and Penn's plan, probably in the 1670s, and described in 1690 by Thomas Lawson, the Cambridge-educated Quaker botanist, to 'purchase a piece of land near London for the use of a garden School-house', in which there would be 'one or two or more of each sorte of our English plants...as also many outlandish plants'<sup>63</sup> was influenced by Penn's reading of Cowley. In the essay 'Of Agriculture', Cowley had proposed an agricultural college, and defended the idea by highlighting the superfluous tendency of the gentry to 'entertain a dancing master for his children as soon as they are able to walk' asking 'did ever any father provide a tutor for his son to instruct him betimes in the nature and improvements of that land which he intended to leave him?' A year later, the first edition of Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* appeared, and similarly condemned 'foolish toys and fopperies', supplied by the 'lust-caterers of the cities' who were unwittingly supported by the 'laborious country'. While Penn believed that all should learn to be contented by taking the simplicity, and perceived plainness, of 'the primitive state and God's creation for their model',<sup>64</sup> Cowley suggested that God knew

what place would best agree  
With innocence and with felicity;  
And we elsewhere still seek for them in vain...  
This may our judgment in the search direct;  
God the first garden made, and the first city, Cain.<sup>65</sup>

Furthermore, Penn in 1693 advised the Derbyshire Friend Sir John Rodes to spend a quarter of his time in 'some Bodily Labour as Gardening', and recommended 'for Improvements of Lands & Gardens' the works of (Walter) Blith – who, as we have

seen, viewed God as the original husbandman – and Smith, probably John Smith of Nibley in Gloucestershire, a landowner and steward of Lord Berkeley who in the 1630s wrote on the benefits of mixing soils. Smith's work too was in sympathy with, and may even have influenced, later Quaker ideals, as he referred to the country life as 'the only vocation wherein innocency remaineth', unlike towns, where 'men seek means and busy themselves how to deceive and beguile one another'.<sup>66</sup> *The Great Case of Tythes* of 1657 shared similar sentiments, and was addressed by Anthony Pearson, then a Durham Quaker and 'countray man', to non-Quaker husbandmen and farmers who also suffered because of the inequality of a system which provided revenue for rich urban dwellers by penalising 'poor Farmers and Husbandmen, and men of great Estates pay least'.<sup>67</sup> For post-Restoration Friends who had experienced the upheaval of the Civil Wars, and the oppressive practices of tithe mongers, such sentiments were perhaps especially poignant. Certainly, Rodes supported Penn's beliefs and wrote the preface to *Fruits of a Father's Love* when it was published in 1726.<sup>68</sup>

Friends other than Penn were also keen to develop the educational and spiritual potential of husbandry, including Lawson, who planned to write a book in Latin about plants for the education of children.<sup>69</sup> The Quaker merchant, economist and social thinker John Bellers also planned a college of industry, 'useful trades', and husbandry,<sup>70</sup> stressing in 1695 that husbandry as well as 'manufactures' should be used to employ the poor, because 'Husbandmen are as useful, and wanted as much as any Mechanicks, much Land wanting People to Manage it'.<sup>71</sup> For Friends then, husbandry was never simply a metaphor. Penn, like Lawson and Bellers, believed that occupations which began with the (natural) world had least of snare and most of use. Cowley had also observed that no husbandman was responsible for 'the twenty years ruine of this Country' in the Civil War, something with which Penn would have concurred.<sup>72</sup> Although it cannot be proved that Penn had direct links to non-Quaker thinkers such as Cowley through his connections to the Royal Society, because as Geoffrey Cantor has pointed out, the degree to which Penn was directly involved in the Society is questionable,<sup>73</sup> Penn had identified himself as an admirer of some of Cowley's works. However, the use of metaphor in Quaker sermons did maintain and develop agricultural language in a spiritual context. Michael Graves' analysis of key metaphors in early Quaker sermons include the Seed, with its affinity both to human heredity and botany.<sup>74</sup> The spiritual cultivation of the Seed of God is, then, an obvious example of variations on spiritual husbandry. Penn's very use of the title *Fruits of a Father's Love* implies a similar cultivation of godly affection and wisdom that could be used to sustain the next generation of Friends. Quaker minute books from the 1670s onwards reveal a similar preoccupation among older Friends, intent that Quakerism should not founder due to their children's ignorance of the plain testimony as it related to dress, deportment or occupation.<sup>75</sup>

From the last quarter of the seventeenth century, male Friends' journals especially reveal their use of the image of the spiritual husbandman to express their religious convictions. As well as Fox's *Journal*, they include William Edmundson's *Journal*, who wrote in 1684 of Friends as 'stewards and overseers of Christ's vineyard, husbandry, and heritage',<sup>76</sup> depicting Christ as a husbandman on whom male Quakers particu-

larly were to model themselves to enable them to become good and fruitful husbandmen. In this respect, Friends seem to have sided with the views of other improvers, who rejected the idea of God as steward of the earth held by those keen to defend the common lands against enclosure, and rather held that He was a 'mystical husbandman', interested in its fruits and productivity.<sup>77</sup> Later in the same decade, George Fox too addressed 'Bishops, Priests, Ministers and Teachers the keepers of the Vineyard in Christendom', reminding them that in return they had 'put to Death many of the Lords Servants' and 'crucified to your selves afresh the Son of God, the Heir of the Vineyard'.<sup>78</sup> Developing the depiction of the divine husbandman, he asked: 'What will the Lord of the Harvest do unto you Husband-men think you, that have done thus unto his Servants, and Son, and Heir? Do you think you will not all be turned out, and your Vineyards let forth to such as will bring forth Fruits to the Lord?'<sup>79</sup> Clearly, for Fox, the parable remained significant throughout the seventeenth century, and was seen to parallel Friends' sufferings and to prophesy their future as true servants of God. Returning to more earthly depictions, '[t]o husbandry it' meant, for Edward Coxere, to live frugally and honestly within his means; this serves to identify the character traits believed to accompany the image of the (good) husbandman, an ideal of Quaker manhood.<sup>80</sup>

#### THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE TITHE TESTIMONY

For seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Friends, like sixteenth-century Protestants before them, the figure of the husbandman was particularly related to the tithe testimony. In Joseph Besse's 1753 *Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*,<sup>81</sup> tithe imprisonment was represented as the root of Quaker testimony against the carnal world, when respectable and relatively well-off Friends lost material wealth but gained spiritual strength and authority. Both Brace's work on seventeenth-century attitudes to property, and Nicholas Morgan's study of Lancashire Friends, represent the use of the image of husbandry as a means to win support or sympathy, and to underline the Friends' views of property rights, which did not attempt to convert individuals to Quakerism but to a fairer economic system.<sup>82</sup> Brace has asserted that the connections between the construction of husbandry as an identity and the development of ideas about property, such as the tithe testimony, were particularly well-delineated in the early Quaker community, and considers the use of husbandry to be a social metaphor. Friends used 'the imagery and language of husbandry and covetousness' to contrast an exploitative clergy with the productive, peaceful husbandmen whose property was invaded.<sup>83</sup> This also relied in part on the representation, developed since the sixteenth century, of the reader of husbandry manuals as one of an educated elite, supervising his estate and informed by his knowledge of husbandry, an occupation 'presented as both gentlemanly and godly'.<sup>84</sup> To represent Anglican clerics and tithemongers as oppressively exploiting the poor was, though, to use a spiritual as well as a secular economic argument. For Friends, payment of tithes dishonoured God by maintaining a corrupt priesthood, and was as much a disciplinary offence as gambling or drunkenness. Those who demanded or

paid it were, like those of 'that ranting spirit which laboured to lay waste, and hinder the growth and prosperity of the Truth'.<sup>85</sup> Such people were believed to be attempting to deprive God's people financially and spiritually.

Although after the Toleration Act of 1689 Friends were no longer prosecuted for meeting, their testimony against tithes guaranteed that their sufferings would continue into the eighteenth century. Friends continued to use the husbandman to represent the unfairness of the demand for tithes, especially in one of the most frequently cited sources for information on seventeenth-century Quakers, Besse's *Sufferings*. Besse had already published several works, including an earlier attempt to collect Friends' sufferings, the *Abstract of the sufferings of the people call'd Quakers* (1733, 1738) and his response in 1740 to the Rector of Burythorpe. The latter work asserted the husbandman's right to enjoy the fruits of his labours unmolested, and also criticised the spiritual state of the established church, suggesting that 'Christ's Ministers were enjoined to preach freely', as Friends did, while the Church of England's 'strenuous Asserting [of] their legal Right to Maintenance, is a strong Symptom of their Want of an evangelical One'.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, the very importance of the figure of the husbandman as a symbol of Friends' rejection of a corrupt priesthood is also evident when original, locally collected records of sufferings, which were then sent to London Friends for collation, are compared to the published accounts. By an unconscious or conscious selection process, a larger proportion of agricultural workers appeared as sufferers in the volumes than in locally kept sufferings records.

According to Ernest E. Taylor, many early Quakers styled themselves, or were styled by others, as husbandman, despite coming from different social origins.<sup>87</sup> Although Friends in the first decades of Quakerism were almost certainly largely rural,<sup>88</sup> Besse's 1753 account includes sufferings from the later seventeenth century, by which time many Friends, alongside the rest of the population, had moved to urban areas. However, Besse's account, by its frequent repetition of rural occupations, suggested that the spiritual and actual roots of Quakerism lay in the countryside. If the occupations of Durham Friends, as listed in Besse, are compared with those given in the Durham Quarterly Meeting sufferings and with all known occupations of those named in Besse, collated from marriage certificates, various local sufferings records and ecclesiastical records,<sup>89</sup> Besse's reporting appears to have a rural bias. In Besse, the majority of occupations named are agricultural. Almost two thirds of the Durham Friends with occupations given were yeomen and husbandmen.<sup>90</sup> In contrast, the occupations of 126 Friends, more than a third of the sufferers named in the Durham chapter of the *Sufferings*, have been collated from the sources named above.<sup>91</sup> These are far less rural in character: only a third were yeomen or husbandmen.<sup>92</sup> Although this may be explained by bias in the Quarterly Meeting records sent to London, analysis of these sufferings, from which whole passages were copied almost word for word into Besse, reveals that many of the urban Friends, including tailors, cordwainers and dyers, who were named and identified by occupation in the Quarterly Meeting sufferings, were mentioned by name only in Besse. Similarly, only half of the Durham Friends with occupations stated who appeared in Besse's earlier attempt at collating sufferings, the *Abstract of the Sufferings of the People call'd Quakers* of 1738, were husbandmen, yeomen or farmers.<sup>93</sup> By 1753 the majority of

non-rural occupations for the same period (1660–66) had been removed, so yeomen, husbandmen and farmers represent two-thirds of sufferers with occupation given.<sup>94</sup>

This agricultural bias suggests that Besse may have aimed to maintain an image of pious Friends working in the countryside away from ‘worldly’ influences, in contrast to the corrupt urban dweller, or worse, the unproductive informer or tithemonger. Thomas Cowley of Darlington, for example, had, according to Darlington Preparative Meeting in 1682 ‘left his trade & fell from Honest Employment & endeavors And lives by ye Spoile & Rune of many A[n] honest family’.<sup>95</sup> Such men were given the term ‘tith farmers’ by Friends, the antithesis of the male Quaker ideal of the godly husbandman, as they made money not by their own labour, and creative management of God’s vineyard, but through the ‘Spoile & Rune’ of others.<sup>96</sup> Seventy years later, Besse reiterated the view and added a specifically gendered dimension, contrasting hard working Quakers to informers, whom he depicted as being often ‘Impudent Women, who swear for their profit in part of the fines and seizures, their husbands being prisoners for debt, through their own extravagancies’.<sup>97</sup> The inversion of the ideal housewife served to define the ungodly, uncivil and perhaps effeminate nature of tith farming, and contrasted those squandering the nation’s resources with (male) Friends, who worked hard and honestly to improve the land.

However, Besse’s account also represents another development in the representation of the Quaker husbandman. Fewer tith cases appeared in the 1753 account than in local Quaker and non-Quaker records, which may reflect the contentiousness of the issue in the years following the failed Quaker Tith Bill of 1736. The 1730s and 1740s witnessed a great deal of Quaker involvement in anti-tith ‘propaganda’. In 1733 Besse’s *Abstract* stressed sufferings for tithes, and contrasted the constancy of the sufferers with ‘the present Degeneracy of too many’ who demonstrated ‘a mean and cowardly Compliance’ with the carnal world when, as the collected sufferings showed, they should have been humbly thankful for God’s Mercy and for ‘the Favour of the Government under which we live’<sup>98</sup> to whom they petitioned for changes to the law. Lobbying for the Quakers’ Tith Bill in 1736, Friends claimed that in the previous forty years almost 1200 Friends had been prosecuted, of which a quarter were gaoled, of whom nine had died in prison.<sup>99</sup> The Bill aimed to help Friends specifically, by making the process laid out in the acts of 1699, whereby Friends could be prosecuted before the local Justices when the demand did not exceed £10, mandatory. This meant that the conscientious refusal to pay tithes would be supported by a quicker, cheaper process, from Friends’ perspective, to distrain smaller amounts.<sup>100</sup> However, the bishops’ reaction was extreme; the Bill’s reliance on the civil courts was seen as a threat to the ecclesiastical courts, and they wrote circulars to their clergy urging their opposition.<sup>101</sup> By this time, the motion to pass the Bill had been defeated in the Lords, and the divisive religious debates it had encouraged reminded the Whig ministry of the importance of its policy of ‘making the Church easy’.<sup>102</sup> Friends too had decided to represent their sufferings differently, and prepared to publish them in folio, and this 1753 account included more agricultural workers, but fewer sufferings for tithes. In this sense, the husbandman had become partially disconnected from tithes, which may explain the use of the term in

later years to represent a protector or cultivator, rather than a more radical figure of opposition.

#### HUSBANDRY AND EDUCATION

Although husbandry, then, was viewed as both spiritually and economically necessary to the welfare of both Quakers and the nation, growing urbanisation meant a diminishing proportion of Friends actually worked in agricultural occupations. Perhaps this motivated Friends to develop another aspect of Quaker husbandry: the training of husbandmen in their schools. As we have seen, Bellers saw husbandry as fit employment for the poor, but only in the eighteenth century did Friends seek to train their children, usually those of poorer Friends, into the occupation. This may have been due in part to the writings of the American Quaker John Woolman, whose abolitionist works were also accompanied by accounts of his choice of agricultural labour as a less distracting and more godly occupation. Gay Pilgrim has recently developed Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, and has argued that Friends’ ‘heterotopic impulse’ to ‘create sites of alternate ordering’, constructing themselves as a distinct people, led to the creation of ‘a hedge between Quakerism and “the world”’ by the later eighteenth century.<sup>103</sup> This is apparent in the desire to preserve the plain testimony, described by Collins as a ‘critical aesthetic’, which represented a rejection of ‘worldly’ concerns.<sup>104</sup> As Pilgrim has suggested, the desire to maintain a ‘hedge’ intensified in this period.<sup>105</sup> This may have influenced the decision to teach husbandry, a ‘plain’ occupation, to Quaker children.

The education of Friends’ children initially became important to Quakers when their millenarian hopes had faded, and many Friends were imprisoned at the Restoration for teaching without licence. Women Friends in particular were frequently reminded to keep their children ‘to truths Language from their Childhood & to that plaine & desent apparell which faithfull friends were brought into in the beginning’.<sup>106</sup> Friends in the later seventeenth century seem to have feared that their control upon their children was slipping, and that the influence of the non-Quaker world was threatening Quaker testimony. As early as 1696, John Bellers commented that children ‘must be hedged from Evil more by wise Management than Discourse’<sup>107</sup> and although this relates to his desire that children be treated reasonably by those attempting to educate them, it also acknowledges the potential evils of the carnal world in contrast to, it is implied, the Edenic garden or divine vineyard inhabited by Friends. Bellers developed this biblical metaphor elsewhere, commenting that the instructors of Friends’ children should emulate the divine husbandman of the parable: ‘a good Instructor being like to a good Seeds-man; but how Poor will the Crop be, if the Husband-man doth not manage his Ground, first by Plowing and stirring it, to prevent Weeds growing’.<sup>108</sup> Further, although there is no evidence of any direct contact with early Friends, Johann Amos Comenius (Komenský), a contemporary of George Fox and exiled Moravian bishop, shared Friends’ pacifism and garden metaphors, describing the ideal school as a garden of delight, with teachers as gardeners who ‘water God’s plants’.<sup>109</sup> However, the desire for Friends’ children to learn about the natural world had developed even before fears about the

carnal world led to the use of the husbandry metaphor. George Fox in 1675 called for children to learn the nature of 'herbs, roots, plants and trees',<sup>110</sup> and he and William Penn, probably during the 1670s, planned a 'garden School-house'.

A few schools actually taught husbandry, usually those to which less wealthy families sent their children. These included Gildersome School in Yorkshire, founded in 1772, at which children of poorer Friends especially learnt reading, writing and accounts. Boys learnt 'such parts of the woollen manufactory, and occasionally in husbandry, as they are capable of' while girls learnt to spin, knit and sew.<sup>111</sup> Fifty acres of land were bought, 'with a large commodious House' to educate 'those, whose Stations and future Prospects may seem to require it'.<sup>112</sup> The similarity to the division of godly labour in Markham's twin works of the previous century is striking, and may also suggest that in some ways Friends were trying to recapture, or at least maintain, their earliest influences by training young Quakers in some of their original, and progressively less common, occupations.<sup>113</sup> Ackworth School in the same county was similarly intended by John Fothergill to have a range of pastures and gardens, and to be a school for children of farmers and manufacturers, presumably maintaining these occupations for male Friends, with girls again taught knitting, spinning and sewing.<sup>114</sup> Significantly, in the same decade, the York Quarterly Meeting recorded that many Friends 'have that Eye blinded which would see a simplicity and beautiful Order in the house of the Lord', continuing that

our Discipline when maintained under the Influence of that Divine efficacious Virtue under which it was instituted is not a mere form—But intended by the Shepherd of Israel as an exterior Hedge of preservation to the sheep of his Fold; whom he would have as a Garden inclosed.<sup>115</sup>

This clearly identifies Friends' anxieties about 'worldly' influences and uses the metaphor of the protective hedge to represent Quaker discipline, at a time when, despite the schools' curricula, the majority were urban dwellers. The reference to 'the house of the Lord' may well refer to the natural creation, that of the householder in the parable. It also relates to a desire to keep to the plain testimony, in both outward appearance and deportment, and the inner, spiritual state. The maintenance of spiritual husbandry, and the support of literal husbandry among a minority, seems to reflect Friends' desire to retain their religious beliefs and identity by maintaining a protective hedge against the increasing temptations of the non-Quaker world.

#### JOHN WOOLMAN AND HUSBANDRY

In the same decade the American Friend John Woolman wrote widely, and in 1770 commented upon husbandry in his 'Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind, and How it is to be Maintained'.<sup>116</sup> Woolman hoped that, through the leadings of the Holy Spirit, young sailors involved in the slave trade, 'trained up amidst so great corruption', might instead 'be employed in the sweet Employment of Husbandry', where 'Labour would be an agreeable, healthful Employment'.<sup>117</sup> Woolman

viewed this as part of his generation of Friends' literal and spiritual inheritance, from Friends of an earlier generation, commenting in 1754 that:

The wilderness and solitary deserts [sic] in which our fathers passed the days of their pilgrimage, are now turned into pleasant fields...we established peaceably in the possession of the land, enjoying our civil and religious liberties; and, while many parts of the world have groaned under the heavy calamities of war, our habitation remains quiet, and our land fruitful.<sup>118</sup>

When describing the New World in 1683, Penn had depicted the land as potentially fruitful; describing the wild grapes growing in the woods as needing only 'Skilful Vinerons to make good Use of them'. The native people were also depicted as inhabiting a wilderness, albeit spiritual; although excelling in liberality, they were 'under a dark Night in Things relating to Religion'.<sup>119</sup> Seventeenth-century Friends going to the New World, then, had needed to prepare for both literal and spiritual husbandry. For Woolman such struggles should be acknowledged and celebrated, as the wilderness – representing both the literal and spiritual state of the land – had been worked on before religious liberties, and the land's fruitfulness, could be enjoyed.

Woolman's representation of American Friends is similar to that of another peace church, the Anabaptist 'Die Stillen im Lande', which represented the faithful as patient sufferers living simply off the land.<sup>120</sup> He finally achieved peace for himself in this respect by 'wholly laying down' his business as a merchant, instead working as a tailor, with 'a nursery of apple-trees, in which I employed some of my time in hoeing, grafting, trimming, and inoculating'.<sup>121</sup> His spiritual fulfilment was unobtainable until he had cast aside many of his 'worldly' concerns, but planting and growing literal and spiritual seeds were fitting work. This too may be viewed as plaining, a stripping away of the superfluous, and it is interesting to note that Woolman's fellow abolitionist Anthony Benezet justified pacifism by relating it to the plain life.<sup>122</sup> In addition, as Jim Peacock has suggested, those like the early Quaker botanist John Bartram were influenced by 'the parable as a literary form which self-reflexively refers to the inherent difficulties of communication and representation', so they became 'a living parable, the sowing of the material seed enacting the dissemination of God's word in a language other than our own imperfection'.<sup>123</sup> By educating young Friends into an honest and godly profession, English Friends shared similar sentiments, and acknowledged both the literal and spiritual aspects of husbandry.

#### 'BOOKS OF DISCIPLINE' AND THE PROTECTIVE HEDGE

By the nineteenth century many American Friends, and probably British Friends also, viewed plainness as it was depicted in the Philadelphia Discipline of 1806: 'an exterior hedge of preservation to us, against the many temptations and dangers, to which our situation in this world exposes us'.<sup>124</sup> This suggests a reading of the parable where Friends were still godly husbandmen, but the hedge had increased in significance, representing the need to protect and defend Friends' spiritual labours from the carnal world. It may reflect fears about decreasing numbers of Quakers and the need to protect the remaining few, and mirrors in some ways Calvin's warning of more than

two centuries earlier: 'let those who abound remember, that they are surrounded with thorns and must take care lest they be pricked'.<sup>125</sup> In contrast to such views, mid-nineteenth-century Evangelical Friends maintained Adult Schools, to educate and evangelise among working class men. The 'fortress of Scripture' protected them, instead of the defensive hedge.<sup>126</sup> The French nobleman and Quaker convert Stephen Grellet, upon visiting Europe during the Napoleonic Wars, also hoped to do 'great work', and, like Fox more than a century earlier, represented the spiritual state of the lands, and his own spiritual role, in agricultural terms: 'The fields in so many parts I have visited are white unto harvest, so that sometimes I have wished that I might have the life of Methuselah, or that the sun might never go down... There is a most precious seed in these parts'.<sup>127</sup> For his fellow minister Joseph Yeardley also, 'we beheld in how many places the fields are white unto harvest, and were fully sensible of our own inability to labour therein' – the task was too great for the spiritual husbandman alone.<sup>128</sup> William Allen, a chemist and Quaker minister who laboured alongside Grellet in Europe,<sup>129</sup> offered solace: 'If here and there one or two are awakened...they may be like seed sown, and in the Divine Hand become instruments for the gathering of others...and bring forth fruit to the praise of the Great Husbandman'.<sup>130</sup> Allen depicted both God and his servants as spiritual husbandmen, and Yeardley similarly referred to the parable of the husbandman when he wrote to English Friends that 'our gracious Lord has condescended to open the way for a portion of labour in this part of his vineyard'.<sup>131</sup>

On a far larger scale, American Friends formed part of the expansion into Western states during the 1830s and 1840s, turning forests into 'fruited plains' and also seeking 'to plant the good society', recreating in some degree the experiences of the earliest Quaker settlers and reiterating Woolman and Bartram's beliefs.<sup>132</sup> Certainly, the early to mid-nineteenth century saw the reprinting of several key journals, including the works of Fox and Woolman, which suggests that earlier representations of Friends' literal and spiritual husbandry remained influential.<sup>133</sup> The Lincolnshire Quaker farmer John Hutchinson similarly described 'the extensive fields of moral and religious labour which the vast wilderness of this world exhibits'.<sup>134</sup> However, the Quaker obligation towards the spiritual wilderness, apparent in Fox's *Journal* of the seventeenth century and to some extent in Woolman's comments, seems to have changed to a desire, voiced in the 1834 Discipline, that most Friends should stay in the safety of (spiritually) limited areas, and be concerned about 'the cultivation and cleansing of our hearts, impressed with the importance of our own stewardship unto God'.<sup>135</sup> Despite the influence of the Evangelical Revival, by the 1850s British Friends considered the spiritual wilderness to include the individual trials of younger Friends, considered at risk of straying due to 'worldly' temptations.<sup>136</sup> If, as Pilgrim suggests, a heterotopia is a 'countersite', a space used in an unexpected way which allows marginal groups to 'rehearse an alternative social ordering',<sup>137</sup> then urban Friends could also be spiritual husbandmen, and the protective hedge enabled them to help others out of the wilderness.

Brace has commented on 'the distinction between a territory and a domain in the construction of the self' and suggests that 'the territorial self...is defined by its fear of invasion and the self within a domain is in part determined through its relationship

with others'. Territory, she suggests, relies on a 'notion of separation, of individuals who can only relate to each other through conflict and competition' and uses exclusion to preserve sovereignty. Domain recognises the importance of interaction, and domains can be overlapping.<sup>138</sup> She further comments on the need to remember that boundaries are both barriers and points of connection and contact.<sup>139</sup> With particular reference to ideas of property in the seventeenth century, she writes of the centrality of the image of the 'hedge' of property to the mid-seventeenth-century radical Gerrard Winstanley, who may have later become a Quaker, and saw the enclosure of common land as 'hedg[ing] in some to be heires of Life, and hedges out others'.<sup>140</sup> This contrasts with the philosopher John Locke's view later in the century, that the land improved by one man became his property, as '[h]e by his labour does, as it were, inclose it from the Common'.<sup>141</sup> Perhaps this was also true for Friends such as Penn, who recommended works to improve agricultural land, and implicitly also the 'land' as nation, while rejecting tithes which were seen as 'an imposition and a brake on prosperity'.<sup>142</sup> It may also partly explain the hedge metaphor, representing a need to keep the spiritually improved safe from ungodly influences. The earlier suspicion of common land left idle may have coloured anxieties about the world so that 'worldly' non-Quakers were seen in horticultural and biblical terms, as, at best, uncultivated plants to whom 'rural avocations' were unknown.<sup>143</sup> The idea of the domain, though, might apply to individual Friends' relationships with each other. Indeed, J.J. Gurney's 1837 tribute to Hutchinson includes the comment that even compared to the picturesque countryside around it, Hutchinson's 'little domain, cultivated and adorned as it was by its late beloved owner, forms a striking exception'.<sup>144</sup> At the hands of the divine husbandman, Hutchinson was an exemplar of 'that silent growth in grace, of that gradual deepening of the root, and unfolding of the precious plant above'. Even among rural simplicity, Hutchinson's Quaker domain, literal and spiritual, was remarkable.<sup>145</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Friends' rejection of the uncultivated world ran against developments in attitudes towards the wilderness. Simon Schama has suggested that 'the forest supplied America with the visible form of the primitive church',<sup>146</sup> and by the nineteenth century, had gained national spiritual significance.<sup>147</sup> Collins too asserts that

it may seem confusing to imagine how we might 'make' nature...the Lake District, having been a wild, dangerous and largely unregarded place before 1700, suddenly becomes a picturesque idyll...reconstructed through the eyes of Gilpin, Wordsworth and other eighteenth-century Romantics.<sup>148</sup>

Some Friends, though, still relied on the metaphor of cultivated land as a symbol of safety and protection. In contrast, Collins' ethnographic research on a British Quaker Meeting in the 1990s highlights a decision to develop a 'wild garden'. Their discussions 'were both moral and aesthetic...relating simultaneously to the good and the beautiful'.<sup>149</sup> The 'wild' nature of the garden may represent a similar change in the

valuation of terms such as 'wild' in twentieth-century Quaker thinking, relating it, as Collins suggests, to the ideals of plainness. Indeed, modern Friends view themselves as environmental stewards, echoing Edmundson's description of stewards and overseers of the divine vineyard, and the 1994 Britain Yearly Meeting's *Advices and Queries* includes guidance on working to ensure that humanity's power over nature is used responsibly.<sup>150</sup> 'Wild' had possessed a specific, negative connotation for many years, stemming in part from pre-Quaker ideas but developed by Friends as part of their representation of tithe farmers and other groups as wasteful and unproductive, contrary to the plain testimony. This change to the view of the wild as something positive and 'natural' fits well with the comment that '[a] landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings'.<sup>151</sup> Douglas Davies, for example, has considered 'ideological trees', including the use of symbolic trees in religious thought, spanning, as Collins suggests of plaining, 'centuries of cultural reflection' and considers the image of the vine and the vineyard in the Bible as another 'arboreal metaphor'.<sup>152</sup> For Friends past and present, then, plaining brought 'communal moral concerns into the realm of the aesthetic',<sup>153</sup> but its manifestation changed over time. Penn's comment that 'the primitive state and God's creation' should be taken as a model could similarly be interpreted in different ways. It originally supported cultivation of the land, contrasting it with urban work more likely to lead to temptation, while it may also speak to modern readers as an appeal to maintain 'wild' areas and preserve them from human encroachment.

In conclusion, it seems that the husbandman, although remaining a suitably plain yet creative metaphor through which Quaker men especially could identify themselves, developed from its initial representation of the original occupation of some Friends, in works intended for Friends and potential sympathisers, to represent and demonstrate to Friends in later years the need to protect the spiritually cultivated through plainness. This reflects broader changes in Quakerism, especially the move to urbanisation, which led to a desire among some urban English Friends to educate poorer Quaker children into husbandry, for both economic and spiritual reasons. Friends' continuing use of the husbandman in the eighteenth century, by which stage a large proportion of their number were middling urban dwellers, suggests perhaps a maintenance also of their original radical identity, especially as Friends continued to refuse to pay tithes. While the Anglican clergy used the parable to justify their right to tithes, Friends, including Besse, used it to defend their testimony. Morgan has asserted that the 'sense of outward mission' continued among Lancashire Friends until the 1730s at least, with particular reference to the tithe testimony and oaths. He rejects the assumption that Friends had resigned from 'the early Quaker wish to convert the world', and suggests that they 'refused the acceptance of standards which compromised the precepts of their earliest co-religionists'.<sup>154</sup> Although this is certainly true of the desire to educate children in a suitably plain way, it may also be the case that Besse's decision to underplay tithes in the 1753 *Sufferings* was a response to the failure of the 1736 Bill. This, in turn, may have led to the use of the term to represent a protective, quietist figure, rather than a radical one, although both were fruitful husbandmen, and servants of the heir of the vineyard.

## NOTES

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  2. Brace, L., *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
  3. Parker, D.H. (ed.), *A Proper Dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and an Husbandman*, repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996 [1529], p. 7.
  4. Parker (ed.), *A Proper Dyaloge*, p. 153.
  5. Parker (ed.), *A Proper Dyaloge*, p. 34.
  6. Leslie, M., and Raylor, T., 'Introduction', in *idem* (eds.), *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992, p. 3.
  7. McRae, A., 'Husbandry Manuals and the Language of Agrarian Improvement', in Leslie and Raylor (eds), *Culture and Cultivation*, pp. 35-36.
  8. McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals', p. 35.
  9. McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals', p. 36.
  10. Markham, G., *The English Husbandman: The First Part* [1613], p. 9, quoted in McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals', p. 47.
  11. Scot, R., *Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe Garden* [1574], quoted in McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals', p. 47.
  12. Markham, G., *The English Husbandman*, facs. repr., New York: Garland, 1982 [1613-14], p. 3.
  13. Markham, G., *The English Housewife*, repr., Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1986 [1615], p. 7.
  14. Collins, P., 'Quaker Plaining as Critical Aesthetic', *Quaker Studies* 5 (2001), p. 126.
  15. Collins, 'Quaker Plaining', pp. 127-28.
  16. Collins, 'Quaker Plaining', p. 123.
  17. Collins, 'Quaker Plaining', p. 123.
  18. Leslie, M., 'The Spiritual Husbandry of John Beale', in Leslie and Raylor (eds), *Culture and Cultivation*, p. 154.
  19. Parry, G., 'John Evelyn as Hortulan Saint', in Leslie and Raylor (eds), *Culture and Cultivation*, p. 130.
  20. Leslie, 'John Beale', p. 157.
  21. Hartlib quoted in Hunt, J.D., 'Hortulan Affairs', in Greengrass, M., Leslie, M., and Raylor, T. (eds.), *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 323.
  22. Hunt, 'Hortulan Affairs', p. 324.
  23. 'Hartlibian Principles', described in Hunt, 'Hortulan affairs', p. 333.
  24. See Parry, 'John Evelyn', p. 135, Cowley, A., 'Of Agriculture', in 'J.M', *The Works of Mr Abraham Cowley*, London: J.M., 8th edn, 1684 [1668], pp. 98-116 and Leslie, M., "'Bringing Ingenuity into Fashion": The "Elysium Britannicum" and the Reformation of Husbandry', in O'Malley, T., and Wolschke-Bulmahn, J. (eds.), *John Evelyn's 'Elysium Britannicum' and European Gardening*, Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 1998, p. 139. Michael Leslie has questioned whether Evelyn should be considered a member of the circle or as someone whose works were related to the same areas of interest, including husbandry; however, Evelyn was certainly in contact with Hartlib during the 1650s. Leslie, "'Bringing Ingenuity into Fashion'", p. 132; Levine, J.M., 'John Evelyn: Between the Ancients and the Moderns', in O'Malley and Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Elysium Britannicum*', p. 68.
  25. Parry, 'John Evelyn', p. 138.

26. Leslie, 'John Beale', in Leslie and Raylor (eds.), *Culture and Cultivation*, p. 156.
27. Leslie believes that St Paul's words in 1 Cor. 3:6-9, concluding with 'For we are labourers together with God' influenced Evelyn's works on husbandry, including his *The Reformed Spiritual Husbandman* of 1652. Leslie, "'Bringing Ingenuity into Fashion'", p. 142.
28. Fox, G., *The trumpet of the Lord sounded, and his sword drawn, and the separation made between the precious and the vile; and the vineyard of the Lord dressed by his own Husbandman*, London: Giles Calvert, 1654, p. 3.
29. Fox, *The trumpet of the Lord*, p. 8. See Isa. 5:6, 'And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns', which provides part of the imagery in the passage.
30. Brace, *The Idea of Property*, p. 50.
31. Brace, *The Idea of Property*, p. 52.
32. Penney, N. (ed.), *The Journal of George Fox*, rev. edn, 1924 [1694], p. 310. See Gen. 3:17-18, 'And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree...cursed is the ground for thy sake... Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee'.
33. Fox, G., *The Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded* [1659] quoted in Brace, *The Idea of Property*, p. 51.
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92. 50 out of 126 instead of 40 out of 58. Bell, *Discipline and Manhood*, p. 182.

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