

REIGN OF THE BEAST
THE ATHEIST WORLD
OF W. D. SAULL AND HIS
MUSEUM OF EVOLUTION

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Cover illustration: A spoof of the “Devil’s Chaplain”, the Rev. Robert Taylor (left, on the podium). His patron, the atheist Richard Carlile, is seen on the right, landing a punch. The wine merchant W. D. Saull funded both men and grounded his evolutionary talks in their dissident sciences. Such pastiches reinforced the prejudices of pious readers, by depicting the moral rot caused by irreligion. The wall posters on the left advertize contraception manuals and licentious memoirs, and a lecture by “Miss Sharples”, Carlile’s common-law “wife”. Taylor’s character is being impugned by portraying the mayhem caused by his infidel oratory. Beyond the brawling and debauchery, thieves are shown in the audience (bottom right) and a dagger-wielding agitator (centre). In reality, Taylor’s congregations were respectable and attentive.

Etching, in the author’s possession, entitled “The Triumph of Free Discussion” (the motto of Carlile’s Fleet Street shop selling subversive prints). The caption reads, “A Sketch taken in the Westminster Cock Pit on Wednesday the 24th. of September 1834. Subject A Lecture by the Revd R. Taylor, A.B.M.R.C.S. ‘On the importance of Character.’”
Cover design by Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

25. Celebrating the Dead

Materialists always attach themselves to the body politic, and sneer at the soul ecclesiastic. Spiritualists attach themselves to the soul, and speak contemptuously of the body. It was always so. But more so now than ever, for the two are more disunited than they were in former times. The extremes of both sides look upon each other with feelings amounting to abhorrence. They hate each other in life, and are pleased to be separated even in death. The atheists and infidels are beginning, like the Jews, to have their own separate burying ground.

Shepherd Smith on hearing that Saull had
bought a funeral plot for his friends.¹

While the museum was a resting place for Hibbert and Petrie, Saull now set about finding his own seat of repose. Old friends were starting to die, and he was in his mid-sixties. Grave sites were important to radical cults. Freethinkers demanded unconsecrated niches where a last stand might be made, with the interred surrounded by comrades. Cadres were formed even in death. The decline of Owenism and Chartism, if anything, increased the importance of graveside commemorations, to hold steadfast those who remembered and remained.

These veteran freethinkers never had anything like full-blown political funerals. There was rarely that flag-waving community turn out, as in the case of the last Chartist hero Ernest Jones in 1869, with his lavish Manchester send-off, funeral cortège fronted by Peterloo veterans, thousands of spectators, civic celebrities, shuttered shops, and so on.² Yet their select cliques employed the same graveside rhetoric of sacrifice, service, and dedication to a just cause under duress—those characteristic elements of martyrdom.

1 *Family Herald* 7 (27 Oct. 1849): 412–13.

2 A. Taylor 2003, 31–32.

Saull's French-style obsequies, celebrating a freethinking life in death, were now standard. They emphasized a lifetime lived steadfast in belief, or rather unbelief. Services were almost religious in intent, while totally lacking any theological content. They used the therapeutic value of funerary ritual for cultural ends. But however recalcitrant the orator, the speeches became somewhat stereotyped, being framed in response to a "hostile host culture".³ Still, that did not stop their equally ritual publication to consolidate the community.

Thus it was that the close-knit group had met in March 1838 over the grave of that veteran Jacobin, John Gale Jones. Saull had probably known Gale Jones for decades and had looked after him (financially) in his declining years. Saull spoke of the "kindred feeling between us": they were fellow Carlileans, Owenites, and Rotundanistas, and "many of our thoughts and sentiments were in unison".⁴ Never had there been a more notorious apothecary than Gale Jones, so much so that the conservative *Medical Gazette* ran his obituary as warning "to the younger members of our profession". It told a tale of terrible decline: how a promising apprentice crashed out of the profession during the turmoil of the French Revolutionary years. Fellow students at the Great Windmill Street anatomy school remembered his "great eloquence" and how he looked set to rise "to a high rank" among medical men.⁵ Having a golden voice, Gale Jones could tickle the ear, it was said,⁶ and that is what made him such a brilliant orator at the London Corresponding Society in the 1790s, when he led the chorus demanding universal suffrage. But the *Medical Gazette* only saw the surgical apostate giving in to the dark side:

He was now the foremost in attending political meetings; he addressed the populace from the hustings; he travelled as a propagandist of the political faith he had imbibed; and his pen was ever ready to defend the opinions he had embraced; but, alas! these exertions tended not to forward his interests; they only led to prosecutions and imprisonment...

The moral for medical Tories was obvious. Decline and disgrace awaited the radical reprobates. Gale Jones sank into penury, in a small

3 Nash 1995a, 167, 179.

4 Saull 1838a.

5 *London Medical Gazette* 22 (19 May 1838): 348–49.

6 *GM* 10 (Aug. 1838): 218–19; *NS*, 17 Mar. 1838.

apothecary shop off Gray's Inn Lane. Here he "suffered privations many and severe".⁷ Even Francis Place saw Gale Jones as "a poor emaciated crazy looking creature".⁸ This off-quoted statement, though, sits at odds with recollections of Gale Jones retaining "to the last the conversation and manners of a gentleman".⁹ But it is undeniable that he declined badly. After the Rotunda years, he retired from politics. His eyesight gave way, his practice never picked up, and activists had to start a relief fund for him. Even though financially supported by Saull, the 68-year-old still died "embittered by poverty", on 4 March 1838.¹⁰

The *Medical Gazette's* obituary was typical of the hostile culture. If ever there was an old comrade in need of celebrating, it was Gale Jones. Therefore, while Tories used this tale as a warning, Saull's graveside oration was the reverse. It went beyond the usual levelling sentiment, that all were equal in the "silent tomb", or pointing to the "stern Law of Nature to which Emperors, Kings, and all the magnates of the land must bow". It became a secular celebration. Saull made his Gallic point of rallying the gatherers with "the virtues, the patriotism, or the philanthropy" of their comrade to strengthen their resolve. With no afterlife, the emphasis was shifted back onto the living, with the life of the deceased used for "moral reaffirmation".¹¹ In honing an uplifting speech, Saull was upturning the *Medical Gazette*. He made a *virtue* of sacrifice. Gale Jones had discovered that most "of the diseases which afflict and desolate humanity, have been the result only of poverty and wretchedness [he was quoting Gale Jones's own words]; that the miserable sufferers wanted not restorative medicines, but actual bread". This had turned him to action, whatever its cost. No doubt "our departed friend" could have "made a market of his splendid talents", in which case

riches and honours would have been his reward; but no, he was so great a lover of his species, and so devoted to improving the institutions of this country, that he chose to remain in poverty, and even endure distress rather than prove a traitor to his fixed principles.

7 *London Medical Gazette* 22 (19 May 1838): 348–49.

8 Miles 1988, 73; Kent 1898, 259; Wallas 1918, 49.

9 *GM* 10 (Aug. 1838): 218–19; *London Medical Gazette* 22 (19 May 1838): 348–49.

10 Parolin 2010, 3; *PMG*, 1 Aug. 1835, 622.

11 Nash 1995a, 162.

It was the medical Tories who were unpatriotic, putting profit before compassion. Gale Jones used his oratorical eloquence for public good at unparalleled personal cost. To the mourners, his was a greater bravery, and Saull drew out the greater moral.¹²

Another old hero reduced to skin and bone was Allen Davenport.¹³ In the latter years, he had struggled with failing eyesight to write on freethought, the need for adult education, and poetry, with his epic *Urania* being dedicated to Saull.¹⁴ The seventy-one-year-old died serenely on 30 November 1846, but not before lengthy ministrations by Saull. They had held a benefit ball for the old man, but it was a failure, and so Saull and friends had to chip in to a public subscription. They sold the remaining copies of his new pamphlet, *On the Origin of Man, and Progress of Society* (his history of private property), to help with the funeral costs.¹⁵ Such was the fate of a veteran agrarian polemicist.

Davenport's last request had been that Saull deliver the graveside oration. That was to have been at his interment in Bunhill Fields, because the limited funds would not "carry him further", explained the *Reasoner*.¹⁶ But Davenport had desperately wanted to lie in Kensal Green, where so many reformers were now buried, and had tearfully said so on his deathbed. With no known relatives to cover the additional cost, Saull's fellow mourners got up a subscription, and the funeral was re-located at the last moment. The cortège with its uncovered coffin started off in the Mechanics' Hall of Science and wended its way to Kensal Green.¹⁷ Here the faithful convened, led by Saull, Harney, and Holyoake. The body was

laid in unconsecrated ground—unconsecrated by the priest, but consecrated by worth—opposite the tomb of 'Publicola.' It was a Reformer's funeral! No mourning clothes were worn, and no ceremony was performed.¹⁸

12 Saull's (1838a) oration made the front page of the *Penny Satirist*, Smith for once not carping.

13 *NS*, 5 Dec. 1846: "wasted to a mere skeleton".

14 *NMW* 4 (11 Aug. 1838): 340; *NS*, 5 Dec. 1846.

15 *UR*, 2 Dec. 1846, 1–2.

16 *Reasoner* 2 (16 Dec. 1846): 18; *NS*, 5 Dec. 1846; *UR*, 2 Dec. 1846, 1–2.

17 *NS*, 12 Dec. 1846; *UR*, 16 Dec. 1846, 5.

18 *Reasoner* 2 (16 Dec. 1846): 18

Only Saull spoke. We do not know what he said, presumably the same uplifting eulogy on the stoical merit of agrarian and freethinking penury. The speech was, said the *Reasoner*, a “brief but impressive discourse on the life, struggling labours, and virtues of the deceased, whom he held up as an example to his hearers.”¹⁹

This funeral at the end of 1846 can only have reminded the ageing Saull of his own mortality—and that Kensal Green, sanctified in its freethought corner, was the place to spend eternity.

The Plot to Bring Freethinkers Together

Two years later, Saull would buy a funeral plot for himself, adjacent to Davenport and Publicola, while the freehold was still available. Like acolytes congregating round the pharaoh, the freethinkers were clustering to ensure the immortality of their doctrines among the surviving faithful. God forbid, was Shepherd Smith’s response on hearing of Saull’s plot. Smith deplored such “unsocial sectarian antipathy that carries itself even into the grave”.²⁰ Although even he had to admit that the freethinkers had been forced to use “separate burial grounds. The Church has only one service for all, and consecrated ground is attached to its own service and sanctuary”.

Kensal Green’s growing row of fallen heroes had propagandist value for the activists. But their shrines to unbending unbelief were not so dissimilar to those of religious martyrs. The collective names recalled epic stories of persecution and perseverance. And orations over the dead were designed to be inspirational—these were graves which told a moral tale. And they still do today. There is now an obelisk in Kensal Green with a list of the reformers and freethinkers, raised by a new generation seeking legitimation in history.

Eight months later, and the wisdom of the purchase was clear. Saull himself became seriously ill, enough to alarm Holyoake. He announced in July 1849 that Saull had “been, for some time, in a dangerous state of illness, and his recovery is scarcely expected”.²¹ A cholera epidemic

19 *UR*, 2 Dec. 1846, 1–2.

20 *Family Herald* 7 (27 Oct. 1849): 412–13.

21 *Reasoner* 7 (18 July 1849): 47. He had evidently been ill all year: he told Richard Owen that “I have been extremely ill since the last week in January”: W. D. Saull

was raging in London, and Saull might have succumbed. Whatever the cause, death's door did not open, and *Reasoner* readers were relieved a month later to hear that he was "recovering, contrary to the anticipation of his friends."²² Perhaps because of illness and age, Saull was now turning down jobs. The Chartist Metropolitan Delegate Council wanted him to act as treasurer of the O'Connor fund, to audit the accounts to prove no irregularity, but he had to refuse.²³

Death for a freethinker was not to be feared but celebrated. And the prospect called for a certain defiance, to counter the claim that theirs was a bleak nihilism, with no hope for the present and no faith in the future. How often had they heard that despondency must dominate life's end without the promise of eternal bliss? As the *Defender* put it, "infidelity cannot sustain the infidel in his last hours".²⁴ And it rattled off a whole series of death-bed conversions as proof. Atheist death-bed recantations made good recruiting copy, and good sellers. Atheism puts its dark mark on "everything which makes life bearable". It leaves mankind "bereft of all hope".²⁵ And yet, "How often has the christian's death bed been the brightest scene of his life?"²⁶

To counter this, deaths were equally romanticized by freethinkers. The dying were depicted defiantly clutching the *Age of Reason*, as a Christian would the Bible. Paine's *Age of Reason* "cured me of superstition", ran one verbatim report. "I loved to read its crushing facts ... use them against your opponents, and remember me, who have been martyred into decease by the physical insults ... which furious bigotry has inflicted upon me." Or Holbach's *System of Nature* was exhorted with the final breath, as having liberated the soul in life, or a volume of the *New Moral World*. Once even Mackintosh's *Electrical Theory of the Universe* was praised in an emancipatory last gasp.²⁷ This was the infidel's hallelujah proclamation of salvation.

to Richard Owen, 27? Nov. 1849, British Museum (Natural History), Owen Collection, 23: ff. 112–15.

22 *Reasoner* 7 (15 Aug. 1849): 111.

23 *NS*, 6, 13 Mar. 1852; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 7 Mar. 1852.

24 *Defender* 2 (10 Nov. 1855): 298–99.

25 *Bible Defender* 1 (16 Feb. 1856): 102.

26 *The General Baptist Magazine* ns 1 (May 1854): 214–18. [Neale] 1848, on the contrasting death bed scenes of Christians and Infidels, went through many editions.

27 *Defender* 2 (10 Nov. 1855): 298–99.

This celebratory aspect helps explain the seeming incongruity of Saull telling the John Street audience at their monthly festivity, amid the speeches, songs, and recitations, that he had bought “two pieces of unconsecrated ground near the grave of Publicola ... for the interment of his family and friends.” The “friends” bit struck home, causing Holyoake to “believe that in the event of the death of any such friends as the late Allen Davenport it would be generously offered as their asylum.” The word went round that there was now “a burying place for our friends”.²⁸ The wealthy Saull was financing the cause to the last.

The announcement, on 13 November 1848, occurred at the monthly “entertainment” (which Saull chaired) to thank John Street’s Directors. One of those directors was the old class warrior who had made his rapprochement with Owenism, Henry Hetherington. The next morning he mused to Holyoake: “Saull has bought a grave, and says he is able to give a friend a lift—there’s a chance for us.”²⁹

And there was. Hetherington was to become the first occupant. Just as Saull started recovering, Hetherington, in August 1849, was struck by the cholera. He had never been one for medicines. It was believed that alcohol exacerbated cholera, and since the fifty-seven-year-old was “almost an absolute teetotaler” he thought he was safe and had refused to call a doctor until too late. Temperance could not protect him.³⁰

The two went back a long way—to the old London Mechanics’ Institution of the twenties. When Hetherington, the Freethinking Christian, was honing his class analysis, Saull was in league with the “Devil’s Chaplain”. It seemed that their ways had then parted. As a radical, Hetherington had had little truck with Owenism and his “beatific scenes” of socially-perfected man.³¹ The activist fighting in the National Union of the Working Classes, the jailed editor promoting complete suffrage in his pioneering *Poor Man’s Guardian*, had no time for sucking up to the rich at social tea parties, in the vain hope that they would voluntarily usher in a co-operative millennium. First must

28 *Reasoner* 5 (29 Nov. 1848): 429; 7 (12 Sept. 1849): 164.

29 *Reasoner* 7 (12 Sept. 1849): 164.

30 John Elliotson went so far as to claim that the disease was near “fatal amongst spirit-drinkers”: “Health of Towns”, *Times*, 2 Nov. 1847; *Reasoner* 7 (29 Aug. 1849): 130; (5 Sept. 1849): 152; (12 Sept. 1849): 162. Hetherington died on 23 Aug. 1849 (Barker n.d. [1938], 61–62, on confusion over the date).

31 Claeys 2002, 175–82.

come “equal rights, and their consequent Equal laws”, in short, political redress for the industrious poor.³²

But Saull had always lent across the aisle to his friend. The two had worked together at the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge and on the subsequent National Union of the Working Classes and the Metropolitan Political Union. Indeed, the two had battled the stamp duty in lock-step for years while raising fighting funds. Saull the Owenite had never lost sympathy for Hetherington’s fight for political justice. Citizen Saull’s outstretched hand had always been grasped. Indeed the two had linked arms on so many causes, whether in defence of the Methodist orator Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, imprisoned for advising the lock-outs to get their staves, or in support of the condemned Chartist insurrectionary John Frost.³³ Then there were the more conspicuous meeting grounds which cemented this camaraderie—their mutual support for the Mechanics’ Hall of Science, or the Chartist Hall of the National Association for Complete Suffrage.³⁴ Radical and Owenite could always be found together. Saull’s fraternal feelings showed when he chaired John Street meetings to get Hetherington out of jail in 1841.³⁵ The warmth was reciprocated, and the two had come still closer in the years leading up to Hetherington’s death.

There was a further reason for that warmth. Historians have generally concentrated on Hetherington the radical firebrand of the *Poor Man’s Guardian*. But what the eulogies emphasized was his later migration to Owen’s camp. Holyoake, officiating at the funeral, talked of his growing “fervour” for the benevolent Owen’s ideas: “they mellowed his manners” and “filled him with hope”. Confirmation came from Thomas Cooper, talking on the evening of the funeral. Hetherington’s “ever-increasing conviction” that a better character can only be moulded by better institutions led to his eventual “veneration” of Owen.³⁶ The political failures of the thirties had pushed him towards Saull’s camp. By 1843, he could be found at a Harmony Hall *soirée*, singing a song of

32 *Ibid.*; Royle 1998, 52; *PMG*, 14 Jan. 1832. 245–46.

33 *Charter*, 21 Apr. 1839, 200; 15 Dec. 1839, 741; *The Operative*, 21 Apr. 1839; *CGV*, 27 Apr. 1839.

34 *National Association Gazette* 1 (30 July 1842), 243–44; *TS*, 8 Apr. 1834, 6.

35 *NS*, 27 Feb. 1841.

36 *Reasoner* 7 (5 Sept. 1849): 152; (20 Aug. 1849): 132.

his own composition to celebrate Owen's seventy-second birthday.³⁷ He joined the A1 Branch, attended the Congresses, and, by the time of his death, had been on the Central Board for a few years. He even helped to wind up the failed Harmony experiment.³⁸

This was the "mellowed" man in his fifties. To cap it, just before he died, Hetherington produced a "Testament", mostly to show that he remained a freethinker, lest any "gloomy bigot" should try to co-opt him for their death-bed repentance stories. In this he declared his "ardent attachment" to Owen's principles: declaring something that would have shocked his younger self, "I quit this world with a firm conviction that his system is the only true road to human emancipation".³⁹ It was not surprising, then, that the Owenites should bury him, and Saull's was his tomb of choice. Just as Saull's museum was the resting place of radical atheists Hibbert and Petrie, now Saull's plot was to host Hetherington alongside Davenport in Kensal Green's unconsecrated pantheon.

The Owenites were paying their debt. On the night of Hetherington's death, they convened in John Street and took over the funeral arrangements. No one else had the wherewithal or organizational skill, and they were determined to keep the funeral an in-house affair. It could hardly have been out-sourced to an undertaker with no sympathy and no grasp of the special meaning of the occasion. Press reports said that the arrangements were left to "Mr. Tiffin, of the New Road".⁴⁰ Tiffin's revealing credentials were listed in the *Post Office London Directory*:

Tiffin Charles, bug destroyer to the royal family, upholsterer, undertaker & house decorator (formerly of the Strand & New road), 30 Great Marylebone street.⁴¹

37 *NMW* 11 (27 May 1843): 394; 12 (1 June 1844): 398.

38 Royle 1998, 204–05; *NMW* 13 (5 July 1845): 441.

39 *Reasoner* 7 (5 Sept. 1849): 146; (12 Sept. 1849): 162; see also Nash 1995a, 165–66. It was to counter these conversion stories, and explain the atheist's positive attitude to death during the cholera epidemic, that Holyoake wrote his "Logic of Death" in Hetherington's wake. It reassured the faithful that a virtuous life can ease the pain of death (Goss 1908, xxxviii). It was also a homily on our one-ness with the planet. Man's "home is with the everlasting, and when he sinks, it is into the bosom of nature, the magnificent womb" ("miserable sentimentalism", one critic called this [Anon 1854, 21]). The fact that the penny pamphlet was publicly burned by outraged parsons did not hurt sales, which reached 30,000 by 1860 (Goss 1908, 11).

40 *Reasoner* 7 (12 Sept. 1849): 164.

41 *Post Office London Directory* (1852): 1025.

The joke could be missed, until you realize that Tiffin himself was a John Street director and former investor in Harmony Hall.⁴² Thus he was a socialist, and (judging by the entry) a republican. The bugs were bishops and aristocrats, or the royals themselves.

They had all known one another since the London Mechanics' Institution days: Tiffin had started there too.⁴³ He had then migrated with Saull to Owen's Institution in Gray's Inn Road, and had joined him in setting up the Labour Exchange.⁴⁴ Tiffin had also been instrumental in establishing its John Street successor in 1839, where he worked alongside fellow director and friend Hetherington. As a consequence, Tiffin was himself at the party on 13 November 1848 when Saull announced his 'grave' offer to friends.⁴⁵ In fact Tiffin was the in-house contractor for 'social funerals'. These were marked by sympathy but also simplicity because Tiffin believed that "extravagance in reference to the dead, whom we cannot benefit, is inconsistent with Socialism, whose end is to produce happiness for the living".⁴⁶ And so it was to be for Hetherington's send-off: a moral eulogium for the living.

The result was a Social Funeral on 26 August managed by Hetherington's comrades. Being assured such a good send-off was part of the attraction for poor Owenites.⁴⁷ Hetherington's cortège might have been "simple", to meet socialist tenets, but the traditional trappings were important—"mutes" who stood over the coffin, and "pages" to accompany it. An immense crowd with banners turned out, a procession of almost five hundred, walking four abreast, with the women weeping. The pages were followed by John Street officials, all bearing coloured "wands" (long crepe-covered sticks signifying their rank, as was the old fashion). Then came twenty-six carriages, some reported thirty, others

42 Holyoake 1906, 2: 599. Tiffin had displayed model houses during the Tytherly planning stage and donated items to Harmony Hall, including a "washing machine": *NMW* 6 (16 Nov. 1839): 890; 7 (21 Mar. 1840): 1187.

43 Flexner 2014, appendix A, 388.

44 *Crisis* 1 (21 July 1832): 77. He was Director of the London Co-operative Building Society (founded to establish the John Street Institution), of which Saull was a Trustee: *NMW* 6 (14 Sept. 1839): 752. To add to his jack-of-all-trades image, Tiffin was a house broker. Saull used him as the letting agent for his eleven-room house, No. 4, Crescent Place, Burton Crescent, which was free to be rented after Owen had left: *Reasoner* 17 (27 Aug. 1854): 143.

45 *Reasoner* 5 (22 Nov. 1848): 411.

46 *NMW* 4 (13 Oct. 1838): 416.

47 Yeo 1971, 102-03.

nearer fifty.⁴⁸ Euston and Marylebone Roads were lined with people, and, on the long journey to Kensal Green, passers-by with caps doffed witnessed the immense procession. It was preceded by a hearse covered in silk, on which was emblazoned in silver letters:

WE OUGHT TO ENDEAVOUR TO LEAVE THE WORLD BETTER THAN WE FOUND IT

It was a motto common to freethinkers and socialists, profound yet trite, but clearly a way to unite the brethren on the moral high ground.⁴⁹ At the end, the socialist dead could still inspire the survivors.

True to this principle, Hetherington's "Testament" requested that any eulogy should benefit the living by showing his good side to be imitated and defects to be avoided. This allowed for a secular liturgy that combined regret at the loss with moral re-affirmation.⁵⁰ As he stipulated that no priest was to "interfere in any way whatever", Holyoake and James Watson did the honours. It went to prove that a freethinker's funeral could be carried off with solemnity and meaning, and in a way that even the religious could find impressive. The poor man's guardian might have expected simplicity, but there was an undisguised splendour in the proceedings. In terms of "imposing effect" nothing like it had "taken place in London for many years."⁵¹ Between one and two thousand mourners thronged Saull's plot as his friend was entombed in it.

No opportunity was lost. The Owenites, adept at pamphleteering, gave away 2000 copies of Hetherington's 'Testament' at the cemetery gates, waiting till after the service so as not to breach etiquette.⁵² Death provided an opportunity to repackage life. Some even gave Hetherington's battle a national importance. In his *éloge* that night at John Street, Thomas Cooper claimed that Hetherington's heroic stand against legalized oppression was more beneficial for mankind than

48 *Democratic Review* 1 (Sept. 1849): 155–59; *Reasoner* 7 (12 Sept. 1849): 164; *NS*, 1 Sept. 1849; Thomas Cooper 1849; Barker 1938, 52.

49 It was also William Thompson's death-bed exhortation: *NMW* 12 (23 Sept. 1843): 102–03.

50 *Reasoner* 7 (12 Sept. 1849): 162; Nash 1995a, 162.

51 *Reasoner* 7 (29 Aug. 1849): 129, 144; S. D. Collet 1855, 20; *NS*, 1 Sept. 1849; Goss 1908, xxxvii.

52 *Reasoner* 7 (12 Sept. 1849): 166.

Trafalgar or Waterloo.⁵³ Gone was the image of sedition and scoffing, rather the radical's moral life and "manly" death was being sold to the public. A holier-than-thou Hetherington, fighting the good fight against aristocratic corruption and clerical chicanery, was well marketed. All the eulogies were now added to his dying "Testament" and sold as a twopenny pamphlet.⁵⁴

None of this amused Saull's nemesis. The Rev. James Smith devoted his soothing *Family Herald* editorials to exposing this self-congratulatory atheism. He reassured his readers of the "Duality of Man" and that the material can never extinguish the spiritual. "Mr. Saull, of anti-spiritual notoriety", might isolate his atheists from Christian contamination after death. But speaking of priests, as Hetherington's Testament did, stultifying "the minds of the people by their incomprehensible doctrines, that they may the more effectually fleece the poor deluded sheep", was the language of "disaffection", and as bad as any Christian's. He deplored this "unsocial sectarian antipathy that carries itself even into the grave." Smith was becoming more conventional. That theology was imperfect was true, but so was Saull's science. Could Saull "vouch for the truth ... of his own facts or theories? Would he risk his wealth or his life on the truth of any half-dozen facts, selected at random from one of his lectures?" Saull's public persona as a monkeying wiseacre was still being shaped by Smith's penny literature, lest its gentle readers forget.

With the *Family Herald* selling 125,000 copies a week now, the word about Saull's lop-sided world was still spreading out, but it was not a good word. Smith's warnings were themselves beginning to mirror *Bible Defender* extremism: about the catastrophic consequences rivalling the French Terror should Saull's atheists ever take power. The spectre of a blood-bath hysterically raised the stakes, as families in pantries and parlours were outrageously shown Saull's moral atheism resting, not on hallowed ground, but the horrifying soil soaked in blood from regicide and revolution.⁵⁵ But such melodramatic scare tactics, trotted out in umpteen conservative religious outlets for half a century, were losing their force.

53 *Reasoner* 7 (5 Sept. 1849): 145.

54 Holyoake 1849b; Nash 1995a, 166.

55 *Family Herald* 7 (27 Oct. 1849): 412–13. On these leaders being Smith's work, and sales figures: W. A. Smith 1892, vii, 240.