

A Memorable Fancy, Plates 12–13

Ulver

(PLATES 12–13)

The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me,
and I asked them how they dared so roundly
to assert that God spoke to them;
and whatever they did not think
at the time that they would be so misunderstood,
& so be the cause of imposition.

Isaiah answer'd: 'I saw no God, nor heard any,
in a finite organical perception;
but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing,
and as I was then persuaded,
& remain confirm'd, that the voice of honest indignation
is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences, but wrote.'

Then I asked:

'Does a firm perswasion that a thing is so, make it so?'

He replied:

'All poets believe that it does,
& in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm perswasion of any thing.'

Then Ezekiel said:

'The philosophy of the east taught the first principles
of human perception: some nations held one principle for the origin,
& some another; we Israel taught that the poetic genius
(as you now call it) was the first principle
and all the others merely derivative,
which was the cause of our despising the priests & philosophers of other countries,
and prophecying that all gods would at last be proved to originate in ours
& to be tributaries of the poetic genius;
it was this that our great poet king David desired so fervently
& invokes so pathetic'ly, saying this he conquers enemies
& governs kingdoms; and we so loved our God,
that we cursed in his name all the deities
of surrounding nations and asserted that they had rebelled;
from this opinions the vulgar came to thin
that all nations would at last be subjected to the Jews.

'This' he said 'like all firm perswasions, is come to pass;
for all nations believe the Jews' code and worship the Jews' God,
and what the greater subjection can be?'
I heard this with some wonder,
& must confess my own conviction.

After dinner I ask'd Isaiah to favour the world with his lost works;
he said none of equal value was lost.
Ezekiel the same of his. I also asked Isaiah
what made him go naked and bare foot three years?
He answer'd: 'The same that made our friend Diogenes, the Grecian.'

I then asked Ezekiel why he eat dung, & lay so long on his right & left side?

He answer'd 'The desire of raising other men into perception of the infinite
:
this the North American tribes practise,

& is he honest who resists his genius or conscience
for this sake of present ease or gratification?

(PLATE 14)

The ancient tradition that the world will be
consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true,
as I have heard from hell.
For the Cherub with his flaming sword
is hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of life,
and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed
and appear infinite and holy,
whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.
This will come to pass by an improvement
of sensual enjoyment, but first the notion
that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged;
this I shall do by printing in the infernal method,
by corrosives, which in hell are salutary and medicinal,
melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite
which was hid.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing
would appear to man as it is. Infinite.
For man has closed himself up,
till he sees things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.