

809
H997p

The Promised End, Stanley Edgar Hyman. The World Pub. Co., Cleveland & N. Y., 1963

p. 280 The watershed year was 1912, when Harrison published Themis, a full and brilliant exposition of the chthonic origins of Greek mythology In Themis, Harrison made three important points with great clarity: that myth arises out of rite, rather than the reverse; that it is "the spoken correlative of the acted rite, the thing done; it is to legomenon as contrasted with or rather as related to to dromenon" ; and that it is not anything else nor of any other origin.

Basic to this view . . . is a dynamic or evolutionary conception of process, in which rites die out, and myths continue in religion, literature, art, and various symbolic forms with increased misunderstanding of the ancient rite Thus myths are never the record of historical events or people, but freed from their ritual origins they may attach to historical events or people they never originate as scientific or etiological explanations of nature, but freed from their ritual origins may be so used

p.281

. . . In other words, the book of Jonah in the reading satisfied our need to be reborn in the belly of the great fish as efficiently as the initiatory rites from which it presumably derived satisfied the same need in the initiates.

p. 282

In a relatively short time, the ritual approach to folk study has met with remarkable success. There had of course been individual ritual studies in various ages long before 1912. Much of this work has never been superseded, and similarly, the most impressive ritual studies we have of the Bible appeared at the turn of the century: for the Old Testament, William Simpson's The Jonah Legend(1899), and for the New, John M. Robertson's series of books on the mythic Jesus, beginning with Christianity and Mythology (1900). . . .

With the appearance of Themis, a powerful general statement of the

— Gull