The Jewish philosopher, and contemporary of Jesus, Philo Judaeus, says: ...for when he most Knew Himself, then did he most despair of himself, in order that he might attain to an exact knowledge of Him Who in reality Is.[1] Philo, in another work, writes But explore yourselves only..., you will gain forthwith a sure Knowledge of God and His works.[2] Philo was an Alexandrian Jew of wide learning who wished to take the best of Greek philosophy and marry it to Hebrew thought. His work was to influence the early Christians as they sought for a metaphysical basis for their own faith. An Introduction to Philo Judaeus In the Torah God revealed himself to be the source of a great stream of Being, as the Sun is of light, and made it clear that true Judaism is fulfilled only when men recognize the nature of this deity, and ascend into ever higher participation in the Being of God thus radiated from the supreme and ultimately inaccessible One. In the process Philo assimilates the religious notions of paganism about him, particularly of the later forms of Platonism and Pythagoreanism. These taught the supreme and immaterial deity, but absorbed much of the emotion and form of the Mystery Religions when presenting the possibility of access to God, the Mystic ascent.[3] The book by Walther Volker [Fortschritt und Vollendung bei Philo von Alexandrien, 1938], so sharply attacked this point of view that we can no longer assume without defending our major premises in methodology. Volker writing from the position of extremely conservative Protestantism, asserts that to use the term mystic of Philo at all, as historians of religion have been freely doing, is to beg the essential question. He believes that, in his own words, there exists no true mysticism apart from the en Cristoi and the sacrament, and that the attempt to make Philo responsible for the beginnings of Christian mysticism is motivated by the desire to discredit Christian mysticism at its very outset by its pretended extra-Christian origin. These hard words, directed against me more than any one else, not only misrepresent my motives, but my position. I have never dreamed of making Philo the origin of Christian mysticism, or any other mysticism. He seems to me to reflect a mystic movement in Judaism which as a whole acted with great influence on early Christianity. To limit mysticism to the experience in Christ is simply to rob us of the term by which we have long expressed a certain type of religious experience found all over the world.[4] When divinity is put up in heaven, or on Olympus, and we feel for him as a child who bows in love and respect before a father, inspired by his majesty and eager to obey his commands, our religion is not mystical. But when, driven by an inner sense of lack, insufficiency, we cry out for a divinity or higher reality who or which will come into us, take away our dross, unite us to himself or itself, then we are mystics. The experience is one of classical ecstasy only occasionally for anyone, and never for most. Often it is a quiet sense of union, with few high points of emotion.

- Phonic Crosspatches: Bk. 1
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