

tendencies of thought which accompanied the retrogradation of inductive science. And of these, the leading feature which demands our notice is that already alluded to; namely, the practice of referring things and events, not to clear and distinct relations, obviously applicable to such cases;—not to general rules capable of direct verification; but to notions vague, distant, and vast, which we cannot bring into contact with facts, because they belong to a different region from the facts; as when we connect natural events with moral or historical causes, or seek spiritual meanings in the properties of number and figure. Thus the character of Mysticism is, that it refers particulars, not to generalizations homogeneous and immediate, but to such as are heterogeneous and remote; to which we must add, that the process of this reference is not a calm act of the intellect, but is accompanied with a glow of enthusiastic feeling.

1. *Neoplatonic Theosophy*.—The *Newer Platonism* is the first example of this Mystical Philosophy which I shall consider. The main points which here require our notice are, the doctrine of an Intellectual World resulting from the act of the Divine Mind, as the only reality; and the aspiration after the union of the human soul with this Divine Mind, as the object of human existence. The “*Idēas*” of Plato were Forms of our knowledge; but among the Neoplatonists they became really existing, indeed the only really existing, Objects; and the inaccessible scheme of the universe which these ideas constitute, was offered as the great subject of philosophical contemplation. The desire of the human mind to approach towards its Creator and Preserver, and to obtain a spiritual access to Him, leads to an employment of the thoughts which is well worth the notice of the religious philosopher; but such an effort, even when founded on revelation and well regulated, is not a means of advance in physics; and when it is the mere result of natural enthusiasm, it may easily obtain such a place in men’s minds as to unfit them for the successful prosecution of natural philosophy. The temper, therefore, which introduces such supernatural communion into the general course of its speculations, may be properly treated as mystical, and as one of the causes of the decline of science in the Stationary Period. The Neoplatonic philosophy requires our notice as one of the most remarkable forms of this Mysticism.

Though Ammonius Saccas, who flourished at the end of the second century, is looked upon as the beginner of the Neoplatonists, his disciple Plotinus is, in reality, the great founder of the school, both by his