synechism

Synechism
(from Greek synechys, "continuous" + -ism, from syn, "together" + échein>, "to have", "to hold"),
a philosophical term proposed by C. S. Peirce\(^1\) to express the tendency to regard everything as continuous, and the general theory that the essential feature in philosophic speculation is continuity.
It denies that all is merely ideas, and that all is merely matter, and dualism.

Peirce held that there are three elements or categories throughout experience:

- Firstness, chance, idea, vagueness, "some".
- Secondness, brute reaction, fact, individuality, discreteness.
- Thirdness, representation, habit, law, generality, continuity.

Peirce held that **firstness and secondness, as elements, give thirdness and continuity something upon which to operate**, and that **continuity** governs all experience and every element in it.

Synechism is specially directed to the question of hypothesis, and holds that a hypothesis is justifiable only on the ground that it provides an explanation. **All understanding of facts consists in generalizing concerning them. Generalization is seen as movement by thought toward continuity.**

The fact that some things are ultimate may be recognized by the synechist without abandoning his standpoint, since **synechism is a normative or regulative principle, not a theory of existence.**

The adjective "synechological" is used in the same general sense; "**synechology**" is a **theory of continuity or universal causation**; "synechia" is a term in **ophthalmology** for a morbid union of parts.