

'Maxim of Pragmatism' (pub. 07.04.13-12:05). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-grand-logic-1893-methodology-doctrine-definition-and-division-chapter-xvi>.

Term: Maxim of Pragmatism

Quote: It appears, then, that the rule for attaining the third grade of clearness of apprehension is as follows: Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." - A note, 1893: "Before we undertake to apply this rule, let us reflect a little upon what it implies. It has been said to be a sceptical and materialistic principle. But it is only an application of the sole principle of logic which was recommended by Jesus; "Ye may know them by their fruits," and it is very intimately allied with the ideas of the gospel. We must certainly guard ourselves against understanding this rule in too individualistic a sense. To say that man accomplishes nothing but that to which his endeavors are directed would be a cruel condemnation of the great bulk of mankind, who never have leisure to labor for anything but the necessities of life for themselves and their families. But, without directly striving for it, far less comprehending it, they perform all that civilization requires, and bring forth another generation to advance history another step. Their fruit is, therefore, collective; it is the achievement of the whole people. What is it, then, that the whole people is about, what is this civilization that is the outcome of history, but is never completed? We cannot expect to attain a complete conception of it; but we can see that it is a gradual process, that it involves a realization of ideas in man's consciousness and in his works, and that it takes place by virtue of man's capacity for learning, and by experience continually pouring upon him ideas he has not yet acquired.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1893). *Grand Logic 1893: Methodology. The Doctrine of Definition and Division. Chapter XVI. Clearness of Apprehension*. MS [R] 422.

References: CP 5.402n2

Date of 1893

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