

'Belief' (pub. 20.03.13-20:07). 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-telepathy>.

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**Term:** Belief

**Quote:** But in science instinct can play but a secondary *rôle*. The reason of this is that our instincts are adapted to the continuance of the race and thus to individual life. But science has an indefinite future before it; and what it aims at is to gain the greatest possible advance in knowledge in five centuries or ten. Instinct not being adapted to this purpose, the methods of science must be artificial. As Professor Trowbridge hints, pure science has nothing to do with *belief*. What I *believe* is what I am prepared to go on today. Imagine a general besieging a city. He sits in his tent at night preparing the details of his plan of action for the morrow. He finds that what his orders ought to be and perhaps the whole fate of his army depend upon a certain question of topography concerning which he is in need of information. He sends for his best engineer officer, – a highly scientific man, – and asks how he is to ascertain the fact in question. The officer replies, "There is only one possible way of ascertaining that. So and so must be done." "How long will that take?" "Two or three months." The general dismisses the man of science, – as Napoleon dismissed Laplace, – and sends for another officer, not half so scientific, but good at guessing. What this officer shall say, the general will go by. He will adopt it as his belief.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1903). *Telepathy*. MS [R] 881.

**References:** CP 7.606

**Date of** 1903

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-telepathy>