Belief

Hence, I hold that what is properly and usually called belief, that is, the adoption of a proposition as a {ktéma es aei} to use the energetic phrase of Doctor Carus, has no place in science at all. We believe the proposition we are ready to act upon. Full belief is willingness to act upon the proposition in vital crises, opinion is willingness to act upon it in relatively insignificant affairs. But pure science has nothing at all to do with action. The propositions it accepts, it merely writes in the list of premisses it proposes to use. Nothing is vital for science; nothing can be. Its accepted propositions, therefore, are but opinions at most; and the whole list is provisional. The scientific man is not in the least wedded to his conclusions.


References: CP 1.635

Date of Quote: 1898