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### September 22, 2013: The Believer Who Wills Not To Believe

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Title: The Believer Who Wills Not To Believe

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9/22/2013— I have been told that Karl Barth addresses a category of person, somewhere in his writings, with special scorn. This category of person he calls “the believer who wills not to believe.” Barth calls this category of person, an arrogant fool. Naturally, the point of telling me this was to say that I am that person. There is a great deal of truth in this. The category embraces the person who’s very much oriented toward God but who does not feel he can accept God. For me, this means that God, the whole notion of an intentionality toward man in the universe, is inconsistent with everything that science teaches us about the relationship between matter and consciousness. Simply put, there is no consciousness of personality or intentionality without the brain. The brain creates the mind. I don’t mean that mind is nothing more than brain, but the mind is impossible without brain. So the question is not whether there is a telos in the universe, or whether there is intelligibility, but whether there is a kind of willing. Any sort of willing is inconsistent with what science has taught us. Of course for Karl Barth, the whole Bible is the impossible possibility. But Barth was referring to something like the inconceivability that God could love us. That does seem unlikely, but not physically impossible. The “wills not to believe” part of this for me is that I refuse to give up what science has taught. This is odd in a sense because I don’t really know science. I don’t have the math for it. And most of what Christianity teaches is in a sense entirely consistent with science. There is just that notion that God sent his son that does not fit. There is a book by Professor Richard Grigg entitled *God’s after God*, which describes theologies that suggest that God is out of reach in the current age. But in my experience, God is not out of reach at all. I have experienced God’s presence. I reject God cognitively, not at all emotionally. And this is undoubtedly part of what Barth meant by the believer who wills not to believe. But if there were the sort of God that Karl Barth describes, that God would not want me to give up anything of value. And science is of value. So, for now, I’m stuck. But I do think there is a way out.