

Fideism is the view that the nature of religious faith precludes rational or philosophic inquiry into the grounds (reasons), or lack thereof, for religious beliefs. Or, in some versions—where faith is not considered a matter of belief—fideism is the view that faith precludes philosophy period. Where beliefs are involved, they are not held on defensible grounds but “on faith.”

Romantic fideism denies, in its most radical version, that faith has a belief component; faith is a kind of feeling or emotion informed by imagination, not reason.

Existentialist fideism stresses the absurdity of the universe, finding paradox at every turn. Faith is a blind leap, a criterionless choice of God or another life commitment.

Mystical fideism is the view that faith or trust in God (etc.) opens mystical doors, preparing one for mystical experience.

Voluntarist fideism, which is similar to existentialist fideism though not as extremely anti-rational, insists on assent to religious propositions as an act of will or choice, undetermined or uninformed by evidence, but also not ruled out by other things we know.

Wittgensteinian fideism is the view that religious faith is a whole way of life that can be understood only from the inside, only by actively participating in that life. Philosophers outside the religious circle do not, *ex hypothesi*, understand religious life and thus have no right to criticize it—understanding being a prerequisite to philosophic scrutiny.

Anti-evidentialism (see your textbook)

Fideists have in common a view of faith as

guiding, or constituting, an entire way of life. Most fideists also agree that faith is, in part, an emotion or passion, though few go so far as to claim that neither does it shape nor is it shaped by the way one looks intellectually at the world. With regard to philosophy of religion, *fideism is defined by its rejection of the relevance of evidence, philosophic canons of evidence, or philosophic scrutiny.*

William James's "preliminaries" for
voluntarist fideism

A hypothesis that is suitable for voluntarist faith must be:

1. living
2. forced
3. momentous (not trivial)