pleasures, riches and honors, being essential to salvation, is most easily, most surely and most meritoriously achieved by those who, in answer to a Divine call, consecrate and give themselves wholly to God, by the practice of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience. Those who embrace this angelic profession form the choice portion of the fold of Christ. They rank as His spouses, and, by the holy ambition of their virgin love, console Him for the craven defections or the cold indifference of so many Christians.

All Christians animated by the spirit of Jesus are religious, just as they are holy, and kings and priests (1 Peter 2, 9). Such is the unity of the marvellous body of Christ, the Church, whose soul is infinite love, that her every member shares, in some sense and measure, all her sublime prerogatives. But as God willed that in His family some goods should be common to all, so He likewise decreed that other goods should be reserved to comparatively few, and through these chosen and privileged ones benefit the rest. Hence, as besides this elementary royalty and priesthood conferred by baptism, there are, according to the express order of God superior and official royalties and priesthoods, in like manner besides the fundamental religion, which is the vital breath of every soul in a state of grace, there is a religion more eminent, more definite, more perfect. Thus as there is here below a sacerdotal and royal state, so likewise is there a religious state which is confined to those only who bind themselves by vows to a monastic life. It is evident, therefore, that when Catholics use the expression "religious Order," or term a monk or nun "a religious," they are perfectly justified in doing so, the cavillings of Dr. French to the contrary notwithstanding.

Each religious order is characterized by the special purpose for which it was founded, and by the constitution and rule which its members are to follow. The observance of the Benedictine rule was greatly relaxed in the monasteries of France towards