

The root of the failure lay in the Convent General. To assemble a Convent General annually anywhere, was unnecessary, and the idea, however specious, of meeting in London and Dublin alternately, ended in a collapse of the whole system. The meetings of Convent General should never have been fixed at all, but summoned when required by the Grand Master; and I am happy to say that this has now been decided upon.

Our representative at the Great Priory of England, V. E. † Frater Emra Holmes, informs me officially that he has ascertained that the meetings for the future of Convent General, rest upon the *ipse dixit* of our Royal Grand Master alone.*

To my mind there cannot be a doubt that the revised system, by reverting to first principles, is calculated to raise the status and dignity of the Templar Order in the British Dominions, as correctly representing the once celebrated Chivalric Order from which it derived its name; whilst the attempts to continue it as a mere fanciful degree of Masonic invention, is preposterous, having neither historical facts nor truth to recommend it.

The lack of interest shown in the history of the Order, is principally the cause of the ignorance that prevails, so few Brethren will take the trouble to read and study the subject, taking things just as they found them, and thinking nothing more about the matter.

THE "DIRECT DESCENT THEORY."

My views with respect to the origin of the Templar Order and its connection with Freemasonry, have been considerably modified: however, it is the privilege of everyone to change his views as new sources of information are brought to his knowledge. I cannot agree with the learned author of a "Concise History of the Templar Order," who does not think the Ancient Order ever found any shelter in the Masonic Body; he holds that Masonry as a speculative matter did not exist until the time of Elias Ashmole, at the commencement of the last century.

There is very little doubt that during the early days of the Templar Order, when in the zenith of their power and wealth, a connection

* Convent General has not met for some years, and is, to all practical purposes, dormant, having ceased to exercise any authority whatever over the National Great Priorities—which are distinct and independent Bodies.