4th. October, 1929.

Dr C.V. Drysdale,
29, Queen's Road,
Richmond Hill,
Surrey.

Dear DrDrysdale,

In contrasting the standard of living of parents and non-parents, of course the deferred satisfaction represented by savings must be taken into account, indeed the most important factor in the professional classes is that the need for savings, as well as for expenditure, is increased by parentage. This, however, is not a separated factor, from the difference in standard of living measured by expenditure only, and flows simply from the same cause that the parent is bearing a part of the burden of establishing the next generation, which is escaped, without economic redress by the non-parent. Those classes which work with capital, of course, feel the need to supply working capital for their children, as well as boots, clothes and education.

The Dean seems to be making a grievance a little unreasonably, he wants his children to be all as well
off as himself, without manifesting his special ability, or incurring the risks of failure he has run. Actually he is able to start them with much better advantages than he himself enjoyed, but this does not satisfy him. I do not think social ambition is wrong in a Churchman, but so long as members of small families enjoy a social capable of advantage beyond the value of the work they are/doing, so long is social ambition certainly a dysgenic factor.

Now suppose taxation were reduced, and to take the most advantageous case, suppose it were reduced by the people of the United States paying a larger share of the interest on war debts; our national income (net) would certainly be increased, and we should be able to consume or save a larger proportion of the wealth and produce. Our current standards of living would rise, and I should enjoy this as much as anybody, but I do not see that it would alleviate either the reasonable or the unreasonable anxieties of parents. They would still have to cut their expenses to a lower standard than those of non-parents, and would see every prospect of their children being less well off, and less secure of a comfortable competence than the only children
of some of their neighbours.

I am very glad you feel that the attitude of Cox and Inge must tend to influence the birth rate of the educated classes who are impressive to intellectual opinion, much more than that of the workers. We have certainly not reached the limit of the process of lowering upper class fertility, and the opinion, fallacious as I believe, that the welfare of the country is favoured by further restriction seems to be a real factor in those classes. Actually the economic advantage to the individual and his heirs of birth limitation must in all classes except paupers, be greater than the national advantage, if any, of such limitation, for the potential parent saves in the unproductive period of childhood and adolescence, whereas after this period the average citizen must produce more wealth than he consumes. It is for this reason that I believe that if ever the irrational objections to birth control were wholly in abeyance, the production of children would necessarily fall much below the economic optimum. You think these irrational objections, such as the Catholic view, have been waived much more fully than I do, so that you should give more weight to the economic dangers, though less to the selective dangers, of the very rapid
fall in births now in progress, than I do.

In my view free competition is invaluable in stimulating the production of wealth, but should be excluded on economic and eugenic grounds, from the question of the reproduction of children. Unless it is so excluded, you cannot fail to recruit the next generation preferentially from the least prudent, or the most bigoted.

Yours sincerely,