

On Behalf of the Newly Accepted Honorary Doctors of the University

Magnifice Rector, Arade Medlemmar is Universitetsstyrelsen,
Mina Damer ach Herrar! Honoured University Council!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I have been honoured with the duty of expressing our gratitude for this high decoration on behalf of all four of us. Not long ago, about 200 years before, during the French Revolution, Jean Baptiste Coffinhal backed up by the Convent signed the death penalty of the famous chemist Antoine Lavoisier in 1794, with the following remark: "La république n'a pas besoin de savants" — "The republic has no need for scientists". In the same year Georg Christoph Lichtenberg drew the following character of one of his professor colleagues in Königsberg: "Der Mensch hatte so viel Verstand, dass er fast zu nichts mehr in der Welt zu gebrauchen war" — "Man is so clever that he is of no further use at all any more."

Much water has flown under the bridges since then, and the modern society of nowadays has recognized the need for a world with scientists after all, and scientists have also realized that modern science has essential social dimensions. Forty years ago on 10th December I heard a Swedish statement on scientific research, at a Nobel Prize awarding ceremony that I have not been able to forget ever since "Förskning ar det lidelse fulla söknaet efter del liderlse fria sanningen" — "Research is a zealous search after a stoical truth". In think that modern medical research has an even higher level of ambition than that, since over and above the search for truth, the target is to relieve human suffering and to improve the quality of human existence.

In this context, we, the first doctors "honoris causa" of the Albert Szent-Györgyi University, wish great success in this endeavour. We hope we have many years of further fruitful cooperation ahead of us for a better future.

Magnifice Rector, honourable University Council, Ladies and Gentlemen. Now I have to meet a honouring obligation. In a few hours, this afternoon, on the Anniversary of the birth of Alfred Nobel, the Nobel prize winners of 1987 will take their prizes from the hands of King Charles Gustav. That is why Professor Samuelsson Bangts, Rector of the Karolinska Institute — who is himself a Nobel Prize winner — entrusted me to represent him and the Karolinska Institute, and pass on the warmest greetings of the Institute as well as those of the Nobel Committee and their best wishes to the future activities of the Albert Szent-Györgyi University*.

* Translated from Hungarian