

46 Shimogawara, Shimogamo,  
Kyoto, Japan, May 21, 1932.

Herrn Professor Dr. Karl Barth,  
Professor an der Universität Münster i. W.

Dear Professor Barth,

Through introduction of Herr Dr. E. Hessel, and by encouragement which he gives me, I wish to write to you a few lines in regard to my enterprise to translate your famous work, "Der Römerbrief", into Japanese, only if you will give me permission to do so.

I know thoroughly well that that is not an easy task. The Japanese word-construction, its range of ideas, its way of expression are so extremely different from those of the occident, particularly from such <sup>as</sup> are to be found in a book like one which you wrote. But that sort of difference can not prevent me from my daring attempt. For I believe this wonderful book should never be passed unnoticed by any man, whether European or Japanese, who takes life's ~~problem~~ <sup>now</sup> seriously. I believe that to the world as such nothing is <sup>so</sup> exceedingly important than to give a correct exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, so as to enable it to read it in right perspective. And let me express my conviction, with all humbleness, but also with frankness, that your "Römerbrief" accomplishes it in many points.

Only I am ashamed of myself to have come to take notice of that book so late. No excuse therefor. A great loss, indeed. I am sort of "one born out of due time". Probably this is due to my being slow in doing everything. But one who is slow may have the virtue of being steadfast and thorough, and that virtue may show itself in the work of translating the "Römerbrif".

Herr Dr. Hessel is good enough, so he promised, to help me to understand some difficult passages in that book. Along with his help, I am quite certain, that I can produce its correct translation. Only it may take a good deal of time to put it in such Japanese style as would not lose its original strength.

I shall be grateful to you, if you would give me the permission to translate.

With high regards,  
Yours sincerely,

*Keiji Ashida*  
Keiji Ashida