

*Deliverance to the Captives.* By Karl Barth.  
New York: Harpers, 1961. 160 pages.  
\$3.00.

In recent years systematic theology has zeroed in on its own communicability. The guideline has been that if theology cannot be preached and prayed, it cannot be true. Such a perspective, whatever its legitimacy, owes much to Karl Barth and his theology of the Word of God. For he insisted that the authentic Word was also found in that outer circle of the church's preached witness. In this book the American public has its chance to test whether Barth's own theology can be preached and prayed. This is a book of sermons. Systematicians may vary in their

168A 7843

For the  
Quarterly  
Summer 1963

this to be their reaction when they read this highly readable book of meditations on selected portions of the Bible. Written by one of the leading Lutheran churchmen of our day, the bishop of Hannover, Germany, the meditations are grouped in five series. The first series is on Abraham, the second on the three New Testament songs of praise, while the third takes up the Sermon on the Mount. Six meditations, which were especially meaningful to this reviewer, illumine the Emmaus experience of two of Jesus' disciples. The book closes with five meditations on Peter's conversation with the risen Lord.

Speaking of the usefulness of these messages from God's Word, I see them lending themselves admirably as a source of quotations for the Sunday bulletin or the parish paper to replace those that should have been retired years ago. Just one of scores of such quotations: "We learn the great words of human life like words of a vocabulary, but often we need a hard school of experience before we realize what these words mean." A better use, however, for these meditations would be as a postlude to a day's tasks before retiring. To put them to such service one must be willing to spend more than a minute or two "with God." This book will help make regular "eaters" out of "nibblers."

The outstanding feature of these meditations is that they speak from experience to experience, rather than simply putting together a lot of Bible passages.

WALTER J. KUKKONEN