

him. I draw near; the poor sick man does nothing more than breathe his last gasp. I ask the assistance of the Holy Ghost; I instruct this dying man, and ask him whether he understands, and whether he desires to be saved. I bring my ear close to his lips; I hear him once or twice heave from the depth of his chest the word which I was seeking, with effort and the manifestation of a powerful will. I ask him whether he wishes to be baptized; he answers me, with as much stress as the first time, that he wished it. I baptize him and name him Joseph: two hours later he is in the enjoyment of what he hoped for.

“Another time, wishing to enter a cabin to visit a very sick woman, they tell me at first that it was all over with her, and that she had expired two hours before. As they do not willingly see us [83] where there are any dead, I enter a neighboring cabin, but I cannot be at rest there; I feel myself inwardly impelled to return, and enter the house of the woman reported dead. Her husband keeps her as a corpse, with much sadness: nevertheless I perceive her still breathing. I commend myself to God, and — fearing nothing but my sins in such matters, and having asked his pardon — I draw near to instruct her, with confidence in his goodness. They make sport of me, saying that she had long ago lost hearing and speech; I insist, saying that I had already found several others who, having lost their faculties for ordinary things, had by an incomparable mercy of God understood the matter of their salvation, and spoken sufficiently for that. At the same time, I draw near and instruct her with a confidence extraordinary for a heart faithless to its God, like mine. I ask her con-