



**On Wednesday (December 4) we commemorate the Glorification of the New Martyr of Russia, St. Alexander Hotovitsky. St. Alexander worked tirelessly in our country at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century establishing and building churches. Among those he helped to organize is our own St. Nicholas Church. He was executed by the Bolsheviks on August 19, 1937 being a zealous witness of Jesus Christ in the dark days of Russian godlessness. As we enter the last weeks of 2019, let us read a beautiful passage that he wrote in 1902:**

Again I stand on the threshold of a New Year. Again I stand on the crest of a mountain, where I may make a halt and review, before I walk again on the path I have trod. I shall halt, I shall rest, I shall hush my troubled heart, be it only for this short moment, I shall hide from the blizzard, which had followed me ever since I set out, and will meet me again the moment I leave my seclusion. Oh, Lord! help me calmly examine my soul and Thy creation.

I gaze at God's creation, at everything which He had sent to me, which has been placed close to me, which, through His will, has come together in my life, and, with my hand on my heart, from the depth of my heart and conscience, I say: all this is very good! Yonder is my happy childhood — how brightly it shines, diffusing its aroma from the distant long ago, how it lights up my path before me, how it freshens my soul, during spells of exhaustion! Yonder is my ardent youth and with it all that brought to my soul the first raptures of feeling. Here are my lessons, my joys, my bitter losses, here are the people to like with whom is my happiness, here are others, whom I have buried in the damp earth, almost unconscious with grief; here are all in whose company I grew up, with whom I worried, from whom I have received gifts of love and of wrath, from whom have I accepted honor and dishonor; here is Nature, which, at times, appeared to me more alive and more responsive, which had more power to energize my spirit, than living beings themselves; here are my pleasures, my connections, my illnesses. All, all this is very good. All was good, that God's Providence sent into my life. Nothing was in vain. Everything was for good.

My past! How far it stretches back in the wondrous country, whence come to me a glad sound, or a beloved image, consolation, and hope, and bitter remorse. I gaze at it and I smile for joy, I gaze at it and I cover my face with my hands for shame. Yet I know: it is mine, it is myself, it is a part of my life, and no power can take it from me or erase what is written in it. And that which is written in it is the future, it is the fate of man. Many are the lives in it, whose mysterious meaning will be disclosed at some future time, at the time when the seed that was sown, will come to ripeness, when, in letters of fire, it will bring forward the word, traced on it by eternal wisdom, unrevealed as yet to mind and conscience, but not to be separated from life. Whilst man lived his days, whilst he worked and slept, whilst he laughed and cried, whilst he moved and rested — eternal Wisdom traced this word on his life and sealed it with a seal of its own, putting a magic spell on it, until the time comes for the seal to be broken, and for a dark corner of a man's life to be lit up by the light of God's understanding, which lies hidden in life. It is an agony to read some of these words, but once you have read them, your heart will know, that those are words of God's love, of God's solicitude for man. And with every new word, a mystery is revealed, a veil is drawn away and man is made able to understand the thoughts and longings of his own heart.

All is very good. Yet, even now, my restless heart is throbbing with unknown longing and straining to see into the distant future. Oh Lord! let Thy blessing rest on us.

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