

## **Mission of the War // Perils of the Hour Frederick Douglass & Anna Dickinson**

### **Douglass, New York, January 13, 1864**

The hour is one of hope as well as danger. But whatever may come to pass, one thing is clear: The principles involved in the contest, the necessities of both sections of the country, the obvious requirements of the age, and every suggestion of enlightened policy demand the utter extirpation of slavery from every foot of American soil, and the enfranchisement of the entire colored population of the country. Elsewhere we may find peace, but it will be a hollow and deceitful peace. Elsewhere we may find prosperity, but it will be a transient prosperity. Elsewhere we may find greatness and renown, but if these are based upon anything less substantial than justice they will vanish, for righteousness alone can permanently exalt a nation.

I end where I began—no war but an Abolition war; no peace but an Abolition peace; liberty for all, chains for none; the black man a soldier in war, a laborer in peace; a voter at the South as well as at the North; America his permanent home, and all Americans his fellow countrymen. Such, fellow citizens, is my idea of the mission of the war. If accomplished, our glory as a nation will be complete, our peace will flow like a river, and our foundation will be the everlasting rocks.

### **Dickinson, Washington DC, January 16, 1864**

Compromise! Let no man prate of compromise. Defeated by ballots, the South had appealed to bullets. Now let it stand by that appeal. There was not an arm of compromise in all the North long enough to stretch over the sea of blood and the mound of fallen Northern soldiers to shake hands with their murderers on the other side! (Applause.) These dead heroes had fought and fallen that the cause might succeed.

Their bodies had been shattered that the body politic might be made perfect. We must continue the work dropped from their nerveless hands. Like the noble Curtius, they had thrown themselves into the black chasm opened by slavery, and as coming ages tread the spot, their voices will say, "Tread lightly, tread lightly, for the martyrs of liberty sleep beneath."

This was pre-eminently a people's war. It was guided by the man of the people, who had never been behind the great heart of the people. We had done much, and all was hopeful before us. Granted that we had much yet to do, we had the man to complete the grand and glorious work, *and that work was left for his second term of office.* [Tremendous and long-continued applause.]