The English had never been willing to grant that the Dutch had any claim to the land along the Hudson River and on the Delaware Bay, yet relations had been fairly amicable in North America. By the middle of the seventeenth century the trade rivalry between the Dutch and the British was increasing in bitterness. There were clashes in the Far East between the Dutch East India Company and the English East India Company. Rumors that war was eminent were growing. The Dutch maintained that the Dutch minister in England was completely deceived concerning the intentions of Charles II by repeated falsehoods. Actually Charles was determined to end the Dutch holding in North America and to end the Dutch rivalry in trade. Charles had never forgiven the Dutch for refusing him refuge in Holland when he was an exile from England. War between the English and Dutch began in March, 1664. Charles granted his brother, James, Duke of York, all the territory between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers along with Long Island, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and part of Maine. The Duke of York appointed Richard Nicolls deputy governor of his territory and granted him four frigates to carry out the capture of the Dutch territory in North America. On August 26, 1664, the four frigates, loaded with soldiers and marines, sailed into the bay of the North River, near Staten Island. Nicolls announced that he had a patent to the Dutch held territory from the king of England and demanded that the Dutch surrender. He threatened that if the English met with any violence he would turn the soldiers loose to sack, rape and plunder. Word spread among the Dutch settlers that the English soldiers had been promised the right to plunder and to take booty if the Dutch resisted. Rumors spread that New Englanders had gotten word of the English plan to take New Netherland and that New Englanders were on their way to New Amsterdam on foot and on horseback to get in on the plunder. On September 4, 1664, the frigates sailed down against New Amsterdam with all their cannon on the side facing New Amsterdam. They were ready to fire a full broadside into the city if it refused to surrender. The Dutch had sent repeated embassies to Nicholls but the English threatened a blood-bath if the city did not surrender.

Governor Stuyvesant wanted to defend his city but he lacked both men and ammunition. The Dutch were surprised and shocked by the English attack. It caught them utterly unprepared. New Amsterdam surrendered without a shot being fired.

The Dutch were granted very favorable terms of surrender. The Dutch would remain free people under the English with the right to continue to hold their property and to maintain their customs. A special article on religion guaranteed that "the Dutch here shall enjoy the liberty of their consciences in divine worship and in church discipline." The English
understood that the majority of the citizens were Dutch and that the English were a very small minority. When the soldiers saw that they were not going to be allowed to plunder the city they were ready to return to England.

By October, 1664, the Duke of York's forces had captured Fort Orange. The English changed the names of New Netherland and New Amsterdam to New York. Fort Orange was named Albany. Fort Gasmir on the Delaware was named New Castle.

At the time of the surrender of the Dutch to the English the territory had three small cities, thirty villages, and some ten thousand inhabitants. The Dutch Reformed had established thirteen churches that were being served by six ministers at the time of the surrender.

Nicholls allowed the Dutch officials to continue in office until he could provide for the government of the Duke of York. The Dutch ministers were allowed to continue to serve the churches. The Dutch were granted exclusive right to the church in the fort. Since the English chaplain had no place to hold services the Dutch allowed him to hold his services in the church in the fort after the Dutch had concluded their service. This joint use of the church would continue for almost thirty years.

In the Treaty of Breda (1667) that ended the war between the Dutch and the English, the Dutch formally ceded New Netherland to the English.

In 1665 the Duke of York proclaimed for Long Island and Staten Island what was known as "The Duke's Laws." In 1674 these laws were extended to the rest of the territory. Special recognition was given to the Reformed Religion but all Protestant bodies were granted government recognition, but to prevent "ignorant pretenders" from forcing themselves upon the people, all ministers were required to present their credentials that they had been ordained by properly accredited authority to the Governor. They could minister to the people of their parish only after they had secured approval from the Governor. The Duke's Laws provided tolerance for all but the Dutch Reformed was made the established church under English rule. The Laws called for the building of a church house that would accommodate two hundred people in a convenient place in each parish. The people were to be taxed to pay the minister and to maintain the meeting house. The householders in each parish were to choose a constable and eight overseers to manage the affairs of the parish. The overseers and constable were to take the oath of allegiance to the English King in the presence of the minister of the parish. The Laws called for the minister to preach every Sunday and to pray for the king, the queen, the royal family, and the Duke of York. The minister was forbidden to refuse the sacrament of baptism to the children of Christian parents. He was granted the right to marry people after they had received the proper license and their intentions had been duly published. Sunday was not to be profaned by travellers, laborers, or vicious persons. No person of scandalous life should be admitted to the holy sacrament. Article 10 of the laws read, "That no congregations shall be disturbed in their private meetings, in the time of prayer, preaching, or other divine service; nor shall any person be molested, fined, or imprisoned, for differing in judgment in matters of religion, who professes Christianity."
In 1672 James, Duke of York, was converted to Roman Catholicism. In the religious toleration allowed by both James and his brother, Charles II, they were seeking to protect the Catholics. By tolerating all they hoped to insure toleration for the Roman Catholics.

In 1665, the year following the surrender, Governor Nicholls authorized a tax to pay the salary of the Dutch ministers. In 1670, Governor Lovelace, who followed Nicholls, guaranteed a salary to any Dutch minister who would come to assist Drisius, the minister in New York. During the first ten years under the English four of the original six ministers died or went back to Holland. In the first seven years no new ministers came. The Governor's offer brought over from Holland, Domine William van Nieuwenhuysen, the only recruit during the first ten years. In 1670 the Governor declared that the Dutch Reformed Church was to be considered the established parochial church in Albany and that it should be maintained by taxation. Laws calling for the support of the ministers by taxation were necessary because the Dutch Reformed people were not accustomed to supporting the ministers out of free will offerings. They expected the church and minister to be supported from the taxes. Surrender to the English had meant an end to tax support for a time for the surrender had in reality ended the establishment of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch West India Company sent no more support after the surrender. With no assured support there was very little inducement for Dutch ministers to volunteer to come to America. The Classis of Amsterdam had no desire to support a church under the English. Very few Dutchmen came to America after the English had seized the Dutch territory.

Ruling the Dutch was not easy for the English. The Dutch ministers and their members were very jealous to see that the English abided by the terms of the surrender and the treaty. They would not tolerate any infringement on their rights. Nor would they allow any moves in the direction of establishing the Anglican Church. The Dutch considered their system of jurisprudence, founded on Roman Law, superior to British Law that had developed out of feudal law. They considered Dutch legislation on police, property, inheritance, and rights of citizens vastly superior to British Law. They considered their laws more enlightened and humane than those of the British. The Dutch were determined to accept only that which they considered good in English laws and customs; they were determined to steadfastly resist everything they considered undesirable.

Shortly after the Duke of York acquired the Dutch territory he ceded New Jersey to Carteret and Berkeley in order to raise money for his extravagances. At the time New Jersey contained a number of Dutch colonists, along with a sprinkling of other religious groups.

In 1673 war broke out again between the Dutch and the English. Holland sent Evertsen with fifteen ships to harass the English in the West Indies. He was joined by Binckes and four more vessels from Amsterdam. They sailed to Virginia where they did considerable damage to the plantations. They proceeded to New York. On Staten Island the Dutch sailors feasted on the sheep and cattle of Governor Lovelace who at the time was absent from New York. The Dutch seized New York and raised the Dutch flag. Dutch rule was restored and the old Dutch names were restored—New Amsterdam and New Netherland. The Dutch Reformed Church was re-established. Van Nieuwenhuysen conducted services in the old stone fort under the Dutch flag. No Anglican
service followed.

At the time the Dutch retook New York only three Dutch ministers were serving in the whole province. Drisius had died a few months earlier. Polhemus was serving on Long Island and Schaats at Albany. Blom had left Esopus for Holland in 1667.

The Dutch ended the Duke's proprietary government and the government of Carteret and Berkeley in New Jersey. The Dutch in New York and New Jersey heartily welcomed their fellow-countrymen and the return of the province to Holland.

It was a great shock to the Dutch in New York when they learned that the war had ended in 1674 and that in the Treaty of Westminster Holland had returned New Netherland to England. There was great indignation when New Netherland again became New York.

The Dutch Reformed diligently and eagerly sought to protect their rights and privileges. Before the final surrender to the English they requested that Governor Colve, who had followed Governor Lovelace, to reconfirm to them the stone church in the fort. Governor Colve also requested of the English that "the inhabitants of the Dutch nation may be allowed to retain their customary Church privileges in Divine Service and Church discipline, besides their Fathers' laws and customs in the division of their Inheritances." Also he requested that the Dutch be excused from army service against their own nation.

The King of England reconfirmed his grant of the Dutch territory to his brother, the Duke of York. Sir Edmund Andros was sent over to become Governor of New York in 1674. Governor Andros permitted the Dutch to worship without fear of molestation but he insisted that they must take an oath of allegiance to the King of England. The Dutch insisted that all the rights and privileges granted in the original surrender be reconfirmed before they took the oath of allegiance. The English showed the Dutch fewer favors and Governor Andros assumed the right to meddle in church affairs. A live issue was the relation of the Dutch to the English government. England claimed that the territory belonged to England by right of prior discovery and that the Dutch had been trespassers on English soil. Therefore, the English legal system should prevail. The Dutch claimed the English had taken Dutch territory by conquest and that the Dutch system of law which was founded on Roman Law should prevail until it was repealed. The English did not choose to enforce the English Act of Uniformity. The English did not consider the Dutch to be Dissenters. The Dutch, the French Huguenots, and the English Dissenters made up nine-tenths of the province of New York, with the Dutch in a favored position.

The instructions given Governor Andros (1674-82) were that he was "to permit all persons of what Religion so ever" to inhabit the province provided they gave no disturbance to the public peace and did not molest or disquiet others. Under Andros more and more Englishmen came to New York. They and Andros wanted to establish the English Church.

Andros forced Nicholas van Rensselaer on the church at Albany as an associate Domine Schaats. Van Rensselaer was a son of the original patroon
of Rensselaerwyck. He had joined the train of Charles II when he was in exile at Brussels. Charles as king showed his gratitude by making him the preacher of the Dutch congregation at Westminster. He was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Salisbury. He decided he wanted to receive the grant of the colony of Rensselaerwyck. Andros secretly installed him in the church at Albany as a colleague of Domine Schaats. He met strong opposition. Domine Van Nieuwenhuysen went from New York to Albany to defend the rights of the church. Van Rensselaer was finally allowed to officiate in the church when he promised to submit to the Classis of Amsterdam. The next year the governor had to recall him because of his scandalous life. The affair was very embarrassing to the governor.

The shortage of ministers was so severe that in 1676 the Dutch and English of Kingston petitioned the Governor to find a means of ordination for Peter Tesschemaaker, a young bachelor of divinity from the University of Utrecht. The Governor, still smarting from the Van Rensselaer affair, hesitated to meddle again in church affairs. Tesschemaaker went to Dutch Guiana for a couple of years and then came back to Delaware. The people of New Castle requested the Dutch clergy of New York to form a classis to ordain Tesschemaaker. The governor wished to strengthen the church in Delaware and to build up the colony. He authorized the Dutch clergy to form a Classis. In 1679, Van Nieuwenhuysen, Schaats, Van Gaasbeek, and Van Zuuren formed a Classis and ordained Tesschemaaker to be minister of New Castle. The Classis of Amsterdam gave approval to their actions but declared it was only temporary and an emergency measure and did not set a precedent.

Governor Andros' report of 1678 complained that ministers were very few. No account was being kept of births and baptisms. Justices often were obliged to perform marriages. More than half the churches were Dutch Reformed. There was only one congregation of the Church of England, but there were several Presbyterian or Independent Churches, as well as Quakers, Anabaptists, and Jews.

The people begged Andros for a General Assembly of representatives of the people. He reenacted the Duke's Laws of 1664. The Duke opposed the granting of an Assembly. The people became so insistent and the fame of William Penn's liberal government increased the pressure on the Duke and finally in 1682 he decided to grant the people an Assembly.

In 1682 Domine Henry Selynes, a preacher of great talent arrived in New York. His vigorous leadership brought new life to the Dutch Church. The same year Thomas Dongan, a Roman Catholic, arrived to replace Andros as governor. He had received from the Duke instructions to grant the people a General Assembly. He made himself popular by his acts of tolerance. The Assembly issued a "Charter of Liberties" that was approved by the governor. The Charter declared that no person should be in any way molested, punished, or disquieted, or called in question for any difference in opinion or matter of religion so long as he did not disturb the civil peace. Taxation would be only by consent.

In 1683 Godfrey Delius was called to Albany to assist the aging Schaats. Delius served his church faithfully and even did an effective work among the Mohawk Indians. He maintained good relations with the French. When
the Oneidas Indians imprisoned the Jesuit, Father Milet, Delius used his influence to secure the release of the Jesuit. The gratitude of the French made it possible for him to become quite active in French-English relations which were increasingly bitter.

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 resulted in increased French immigration to New York. Large numbers of French Walloons and French Huguenots settled on Long Island and Staten Island. A fourth of the population of New York City was soon French. Five or six French churches were established in and about New York City. Pierre Daille who had arrived in New York in 1682 became one of the most important leaders among the French. In 1687 he was joined by Pierre Peirot. Daille itinerated among the scattered French. In 1688 the French built a house of worship on Marketfield Street in New York City. De Bon Repos came to New York to serve the French on Staten Island and at New Paltz. Good relations prevailed between the Dutch Reformed and the French Protestants.

When James II ascended to the English throne in 1685 he made New York a crown colony. He repealed the Charter of Liberties and a little later dissolved the Assembly. He instructed Governor Dongan to persecute no one for religious reasons but granted state support only to the Anglicans. In his report to the king in 1687 he stated that in New York City there was a Church of England meeting in the fort and served by a Chaplain. There were also a Dutch Calvinist church, a French Calvinist church, and a Dutch Lutheran church. The prevailing opinion was Dutch Calvinist. There were very few members of the Church of England and very few Roman Catholics. There was an abundance of Quaker preachers, both men and women—Singing Quakers, Ranting Quakers—and also Sabbatarians and Anti-Sabbatarians and some Anabaptists and some Jews. He also noted that Dutch Calvinists had little interest in converting their slaves. Dongan reported that in seven years only twenty families had come to New York from Great Britain.

All through the reign of James II the Dutch Reformed lived in great fear that he would move to establish Roman Catholicism. His tolerance of the various religions was motivated by his desire to insure protection for his fellow Roman Catholics. At Dongan's death the king extended the authority of Andros who had been made Governor of Massachusetts in 1686. He was made governor of New York and New Jersey while continuing as governor of Massachusetts. Andros continued the policy of liberty of conscience for all, but called for severe punishment for drunkenness, debauchery, swearing, and blasphemy. Andros appointed Nicholson to be his lieutenant-governor over New York.

The overthrow of James II in 1688 and the accession of the Dutch stadtholder, William III, and Mary, the daughter of James II, to the English throne was welcomed by the Dutch Reformed in New York. They had high hopes for a better government. When William III delayed in replacing the old regime great confusion resulted. In Boston the citizens arrested Governor Andros as the tool of James II and appointed a Committee of Safety. The people of New York called for the removal of the representatives of the dethroned James and the appointing of a Committee of Safety. When Nicholson dismissed a sentinel the people were determined that friends of William should take the fort from the administration of James. Colonel Jacob Leisler led what would be known as Leisler's Revolt. Colonel Leisler became the leader of a strong Anti-Catholic party. Leisler was made captain of the
fort and commander of the whole province. Nicholson had to flee but left his Councillors in charge.

The Dutch clergy considered Leisler unfit to head the government. They continued loyal to the Councillors. The majority of the people considered Leisler and his supporters loyal followers of William. The Dutch clergy denounced Leisler. The result was a widening gulf between the clergy and the people. Many refused to attend church services. Leisler allowed Domine Selyns to continue in his church because he did not openly act against the revolt, though secretly he was in communication with and sympathetic to the opposition to Leisler. Domine Dellius of Albany was summoned to New York for failing to recognize Leisler's authority and was accused of being in league with the French. Leisler accused his opponents of treason and confiscated their property.

When the king finally appointed Henry Sloughter to be governor, Leisler was arrested, accused of treason, tried and was executed along with a number of followers. Their property was confiscated. Selyns rejoiced over Leisler's downfall and preached a sermon on the text from the Psalms, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Under Queen Mary and Governor Fletcher, the Leisler Revolt was reviewed in England and Leisler's name was cleared of the charge of treason, and his authority was legalized. The confiscated property was ordered restored. Fletcher did not find it advisable to restore the property. Under Lord Bellomont as Governor, in 1698, the relatives of those executed, were able to secure an order to have the bodies of those executed exhumed and buried under the floor of the Dutch Church on Garden Street. Feelings continued to run high between the Leisler party and the anti-Leislerians.

In accordance with the Edict of Toleration of 1689, Governor Sloughter proclaimed toleration for all except Roman Catholics. He failed to get the Assembly to pass an act for the proper maintenance of a minister in every town of forty or more families. Efforts to establish the Anglican Church disappointed the Dutch Reformed. Governor Fletcher who arrived in 1692 was able to secure in 1693 the passage of a Ministry Act providing for the maintenance of a "good sufficient Protestant Minister." The Dutch members intended for the minister to be Dutch Reformed. The Governor and the Anglicans understood that this meant the establishment of the Anglican Church. Many of the people so understood the Ministry Act.

The Dutch congregation in Manhattan petitioned for a charter that would insure the legal status of the church. After several attempts, finally in 1696 the Manhattan church was granted a charter—after a handsome gift to the governor. In 1697 the governor granted a charter to Trinity Church (Anglican). The Manhattan Church gave its support to other Dutch churches who sought charters.

In 1690 the French and Indian allies attacked and burned Schenectady. Domine Tesschenmaeker was among those killed. His head was split open and his body partially burned.
In 1700 there were some thirty-four Dutch Reformed Churches in New York and one Anglican Church. Some of the Dutch Churches held services only a few times a year. Dutch churches were growing slowly in New Jersey. The chief enemy of the Dutch Reformed was not the English government. They were characterized by lethargy and complacency. Out of some twenty-three ministers who had served since the English had taken control, only seven remained active at the opening of the new century. It would take the Great Awakening to kindle vigorous life in the Dutch Churches. In the Great Awakening the Dutch would experience a fierce battle between the rigid formalists among the clergy and those who championed the enthusiasm of the new revivals.