

Thomas Cranmer

Thomas Cranmer, the first archbishop of Canterbury, was born in 1489. Although in his profession as a divine, he was somewhat politic as a statesman, and thus was well suited to unite the religious and worldly enemies of popery. He was also a servile adherent of Henry VIII. After the death of the latter, he joined the upholders of Lady Jane Grey, who was also a Protestant, and was accordingly sent to the Tower on the accession of Mary; and being accused of heresy by the papal party, was burned at Oxford, 1556. As a reformer, he introduced the Bible into the churches, and so used his influence as a regent of Edward VI that the Reformation greatly prospered during the young monarch's reign. Shortly before his martyrdom, he signed a recantation contrary to his convictions, in hope of life; but at the stake he was more courageous, first thrusting into the flames the hand which signed the document, exclaiming many times, "O my unworthy right hand!"