

cal and religious world had some of its strongest figures, the revolt against the establishment had its largest success. This is one of the factors that prompts us to note that the Reformation was a work of God. His control of history is rarely more apparent than in the events of this age.

Spain

The peninsular nation was united under the joint rule of Ferdinand and Isabella thus making one monarchy of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile. (Their reign covered the years 1469-1516). Ferdinand was very clever (he is the model behind Machiavelli's The Prince) and not bothered much by principles. He drove the Moors from Spain, gained a favorable decision over Portugal in the matter of dividing the new world, and sought to have greater prestige and more power than the king of France. His rule supplied much of the force for the early Spanish exploration and conquest in the new world. Modern Spain is pretty much marked from this era.

The daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella was married to the son of Maximilian of Austria and the child of that union was Charles V. You can see how this ruler inherited two powerful thrones and in binding them together enabled himself to be the most powerful leader of the empire in a long time.

In the early part of the Reformation age, Spain is the rising world power. Hopes for national superiority will not aid the pope when it comes to suppressing Protestants, or the Jews.

France

Finally the French nation is united, to some degree, following the 100 years of war with England during which time most of what is called continental France was either returned or claimed by the French. (The history goes back to the Norman conquest in England in 1066 and their claim to the lands of France.) The ruler during much of the Reformation is Francis I (1515-1547) who served as a notable despot interested in the material wealth of his nation. He will do anything to keep the Spanish from being superior to him and will be a strong rival to the emperor. The care of the church is far down the list of his priorities. We may safely say that Francis would give his help and power to anything that would advance the national cause.