

Paul is the connecting link between Christ and the Christian Church. He is pre-eminently the "apostle to the Gentiles;" and, after our Lord, is the foremost figure of the New Testament. For convenience of study we have divided Paul's life and work into four parts, as outlined above.

I. PAUL'S EARLY YEARS.

1. He was born about A.D. 2, and was six years younger than our Lord.

2. His birthplace was Tarsus, in Asia Minor, two hundred and fifty miles north of Jerusalem, the centre of Asiatic culture, and famous for its great schools.

3. He was a Hebrew of pure blood, of the tribe of Benjamin, and reared in the strictest faith of the Pharisee.

4. According to the custom of Jewish families, he was made to learn the trade of the tent-maker.

5. He was evidently of a wealthy family, and inherited the rights of Roman citizenship.

6. He was converted under miraculous circumstances near to Damascus, whither he was going as a trusted lieutenant of the Jewish Sanhedrin. His conversion took place in A.D. 38, when Paul was about thirty-five years old.

7. Persecuted by the Jews, he fled as an exile to Arabia, where he spent three years in study, and received revelations from Christ.

8. Returning to Tarsus, his birthplace, he preached about three years.

9. Leaving Tarsus, he spent the next three years at Antioch, the great Asiatic commercial metropolis, preaching the Gospel and organizing the Christian Church in this city, which for many years was the centre of Gentile Christianity.

10. At the age of about forty-five, in the year 48 A.D., he commenced his great career as a world-wide missionary and evangelist.

II. PAUL'S MISSIONARY TOURS.

Three of these tours are outlined in the book of Acts. The Bible students of best repute are agreed that Paul also made a fourth tour, near the close of his life, after his first imprisonment at Rome, into Spain and beyond.

1. His first tour (with Barnabas) began from Antioch, A.D. 48, and lasted two years. Paul passed through Asia Minor,

and in order founded the four churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

2. The second tour, after a year's interim spent at Antioch, began (with Silas as companion) A.D. 51, and lasted three years. Passing through Asia Minor into Europe, Paul founded the four great European church of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth, besides visiting and preaching in Athens.

3. The third tour was one of inspection largely. The route was much the same as in the second tour. It began at Antioch, A.D. 54, and included Asia Minor and Europe. Its most notable event was the planting of the great "mother church" at Ephesus, and Paul's three years' pastorate over it. Ephesus was the chief city of Asia Minor, and was the centre of pagan idolatry.

III. PAUL'S LAST YEARS.

1. Returning by sea from Asia Minor, by way of Caesarea, Paul was arrested at Jerusalem, arraigned for heresy by the Sanhedrin, and imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (A.D. 58-60). Caesarea was the Roman provincial capital of Palestine.

2. The next two years (A.D. 61, 62) Paul spent in prison at Rome, whither he was conveyed as a prisoner of the Emperor Nero.

3. Released by Nero, A.D. 63 (according to many commentators), he spent the following three years in Macedonia and Spain; returning thence to Asia Minor, where he was again arrested and carried in bonds to Rome.

4. He was beheaded near Rome on the "Ostian Way," by the order of the Emperor Nero, in the year 66 or 67 A.D., aged about sixty-five years.

IV. PAUL'S GREAT DOCTRINES.

The teachings of our Lord were extended and illustrated by Paul in fourteen of the twenty-one doctrinal books of the New Testament. His great doctrines centered about the following:

1. That the Gospel was universal, designed alike for the Jew and Gentile.

2. That in Christ was the perfect fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy and Levitical types and sacrifices.

3. That justification by faith only is the essential condition of salvation.

4. That the resurrection of Christ is the type and the prophecy of the believer's resurrection, and that this doctrine is fundamental to Christianity.

5. That there will be a second coming of our Lord.