His claim to be regarded as the inventor of tragedy in the true sense of the term depends upon the extent to which this person was really an “ actor ” (see Drama). Suïdas gives the titles (of doubtful authenticity) of several of his plays (not confined to the legends of Dionysus, but embracing the whole body of heroic legends), but the fragments quoted in various writers as from Thespis are probably forgeries by Heracleides of Pontus. The statement of Horace (*Ars* *Poetica,* 276) that Thespis went round Attica with a cart, on which his plays were acted, is due to confusion between the origin of tragedy and comedy, and a reminiscence of the scurrilous jests which it was cus­tomary to utter from a waggon *(σκώμματα ϵξ* αμάξηs) at certain religious festivals. A. and Μ. Croiset *(History of Greek Litera­ture,* Eng. tr., 1904), who attach more importance to the part played by Thespis in the development of tragedy, accept the testimony of Horace. According to them, Thespis, actor and manager, transported his apparatus on a cart to the deme in which he intended to produce his drama, formed and trained a chorus, and gave a representation in public.

See Drama; and W. Christ, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* (1898).

**THESSALONIANS, EPISTLES TO THE,** two books of the New Testament. The Christian community in Thessaìonica (mod. Salonica) was founded by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, shortly before the visit to Athens and Corinth. The Gospel preached covered not only the general Christian convictions as to monotheism, belief in Jesus as Messiah Lord, and the im­pending judgment, but also the specifically Pauline doctrine of the indwelling Christ or Spirit, the earnest of acquittal at the Day of the Lord and of life with Christ for ever. It is the same Gospel as that preached in Galatia, in spite of the fact that the word “ justification ” does not appear in the Thessa­lonian letters (cf. 2 Thess. i. 11 f.). The converts, mainly Gentiles and chiefly manual labourers (many of whom, accord­ing to the episodical narrative of Acts xvii., had been already attached more or less loosely to Judaism), suffered persecution from the beginning at the hands of their fellow-countrymen. Some of them, moreover, owing partly to this persecution, but mainly to the belief that the Lord was soon to return, gave up work, thus creating most of the difficulties with which Paul, in these letters, has to cope. Forced to leave Thessaìonica after a brief sojourn (how long is uncertain), Paul hastened to Athens, from which place he sent Timothy back to Thessaìonica, being himself unable to go, much as he longed to see his converts. From Athens, Paul went on to Corinth, where Timothy joined him, bringing good news about the Thessalonian converts, especially about their endurance under affliction, and bringing likewise, as Rendel Harris has suggested, a letter from the leaders of the church. The report was, however, not wholly favourable. The sudden departure of Paul, and his failure to return, had been misinterpreted. Some were insinuating that Paul had preached with intent to deceive and as a pretext to cover impure designs (1 Thess. ii. 5); some, perhaps the same people, disregarding Paul’s injunction (2 Thess. iii. 10), had remained idle, had fallen into drunken habits (1 Thess. v. 7), had been tempted to revert to the impure worship of the heathen gods (1 Thess. iv. 3 ff.), and, in their lack of funds, had demanded, speaking in the spirit (cf. *Didachē* xi. 12), money from the church officers, thus dis­turbing the peace of the church, and causing the soberer minds to question the validity of spiritual gifts (1 Thess. iv. 11 ff., v. 12 ff.).

Paul's reply, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, written from Corinth in a.d. 53 or 48, is as tactful as Philemon and as personal as Galatians. In the first three chapters, he reviews his relation to the church from the beginning, commending highly the reception accorded to the Gospel and its messengers, and meeting the insinuations already alluded to by reminding the readers that, although as an apostle he was entitled not only to special respect but to an honorarium, yet he earned his own living and loved them as a father. As to his failure to return, he explained that it was not his own fault. He wanted to go back but Satan hindered him. Even now, as he writes, he is praying that he may soon see them face to face. After the prayer, he takes up the points in which they had shown want of faith. To those who are tempted by the heathen worship, he points out that Christian consecration is something ethical, to be won only in the power of the conse­crating Spirit. Respect for one’s wife is an antidote to this enticement, and marriage with pure motives a safeguard against adultery. Passing on to other points, he urges that there would be no schism in love of the brethren, if the idlers would work and mind their own business (1 Thess. iv. 1-12). There is no advantage at the Parousia of the living over the dead, for both simultaneously will meet the Lord. The desire for more accurate information about times and seasons is unnecessary, for their present knowledge is accurate enough, viz. that the day is to come suddenly and it is a day of destruction for the wicked. The main thing for them is to be prepared for that day (1 Thess. iv. 13-v. II). With the specific situation still in mind, he adds his final injunctions. Respect your presiding officers, purposely called “ the labourers,” and let there be peace. Warn the idlers, encourage those who are impatient of the Parousia, and cling to those tempted by the heathen worship. In spite of the temptation to avenge your perse­cutors, be patient with them, return good for evil, exemplifying to all what is the Christian good. In spite of affliction, let there be joy, prayer and thanksgiving (1 Thess. v. 14-18). The charismata are to be respected, and at the same time tested *(ibid.* 19-22). A prayer for complete consecration, a charge that all should hear the letter read (apparently the leaders were tempted to neglect the idlers and the idlers had threatened not to listen to any epistolary communication from Paul), and a benediction bring the letter to an end *(ibid.* 23-28).

Such a letter, dominated as it is by the spirit of the Paul we know and fitting nicely the recoverable situation, is unques­tionably genuine, and few there be who deny it.

What effect this letter had, it is impossible fully to say. Apparently, it did not quell the excitement for which the idlers were largely responsible. Paul’s discussion of the relation of dead and living at the Parousia seemed insufficient. His re­fusal to go further into times and seasons than the statement “ the day comes as a thief in the night,” is made the point of departure for the idlers to assert, on the basis of alleged spiritual utterances, corroborated, to the dismay of the leaders, by a reference to an anonymous letter reckoned to the account of Paul, that “ the day is present.” The troubled leaders send post-haste a letter to Corinth stating the situation and asking definite opinions as to the Parousia and the assembling of the saints. Paul is grievously disturbed, both because the first letter, in his judgment, was clear, and because of the associa­tion of his authority with the anonymous letter. Only a short interval has elapsed, to be reckoned in weeks, when Paul, with the first letter distinctly in mind and with a vivid recollection of his oral teaching on mooted points, hastens with Silvanus and Timothy to write the Second Epistle.

In one long sentence of prayer and thanksgiving (2 Tħess. i. 3-12), he insists tactfully that their religious-ethical growth makes it his bounden duty to thank God, in spite of their written demurrer, compels him indeed of his own motion to boast of their faith and endurance, qualities which are evidence of the Divine purpose to account them worthy of the kingdom for which they, as they wrote, as well as he, are suffering. Suddenly remembering a Pharisaic Psalm, not unlike in purport to one of the Psalms of Solomon, and admirably adapted to his present purpose, namely, of contrasting the fate of the wicked with that of the righteous at the Parousia, he quotes it, making a few Christian touches in his own style (2 Thess. i. 6-10). Whereupon he prays, as they too prayed in their letter, that God would deem them worthy of the calling, and ensure them of the acquittal at the last day, by giving them in the power of the Spirit that present life in the Spirit which guarantees the future life in Christ. Then, disregarding the request for more information about the assembling, of which, he thinks, he had spoken sufficiently in his first letter,