

**THE CENTURY
BIBLE:
JUDGES AND RUTH**

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The Century Bible: Judges and Ruth by Anonymous

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE object of this commentary is not to evolve historical or religious teaching from the books treated. That should be the final object of every thoughtful reader. The special work of the editor is to show what material is available for such a purpose, how it arose and how it has fared in the course of its transmission. For those who would study these things more in detail, this little book may serve as an introduction to the fuller works cited under *Literature*.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

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THE PLACE OF THE BOOK IN THE CANON.

THE Hebrew Bible, of which our O. T. is a translation, is known among Jews as 'The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.' The three titles correspond with three divisions of the O. T. writings, and indicate three stages in the formation of the Canon. 'The Law,' comprising Genesis to Deuteronomy, formed the first Hebrew Bible, and was received as such about the end of the fifth century B.C. To this was added, not later than 200 B.C., the collection called 'the Prophets,' composed of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings in the first half, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor Prophets in the second part. The third Canon, called 'the Writings,' was practically closed at the time of Christ, though the fitness of some books to be in it was matter of dispute until near the end of the first century A.D. In it were contained the Psalms (the Jewish hymn-book), the two Wisdom books, Proverbs, and Job, a collection of five small works (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) recited in the synagogues on certain special days, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the great Church History of the Jews. The first half of the second Canon thus contained the history of the Hebrews from the death of Moses to the Exile, and the Book of Judges was put into this Canon to fill up the gap from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel. Was the book written for this purpose and at this time, or was it already in existence? Like the other historical books of the O. T. it is anonymous. Little or no regard