CIRCUMSTANCES have led me to the reconsideration of this fascinating Hebrew proverb. What was the fruit designated by יִשְׂאָל? Was it the apple or the quince? But then, why are we told of “apples of gold”? Does not this phrase seem to point to some special kind of fruit different from the ordinary apple? Could the citron be meant — the post-Biblical et hr qg, which the Greeks called Median apples? If so, Prov. 25:11 would of necessity be post-Exilic. Then there is the double difficulty of יִשְׂאָל, or (cf. ה) יִשְׂאָל, and יִשְׂאָל; also the insufficient harmony between vs.11 and vs.12; and the peculiar phenomenon of ל, which gives vs.11,12 thus:

\[
\text{μήλων σισσουαν ἐν ὄρμασι (Jäger, φαρμάσεις, 'basket') σάρδιαν, ὑπὸσε ἑκένω λόγον, εἰς ἐνώσιον χρυσοῦ καὶ σάρδιον πολυτελεῖς δέδεται, λόγος σοφοῦ εἰς ἐνώσιον ὁς.}
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As to ‘apples of gold,’ it will probably be admitted that the most natural sense is not ‘fruit like gold’ but ‘artificial fruit made of gold’; for the יִשְׂאָל are certainly supposed to be of silver. But when we look at the improbable words which close vs.11, may we not consider the question whether a great part of the verse may not be corrupt? A little help can be obtained from ל. In vs.11a we should certainly read יִשְׂאָל for יִשְׂאָל, and in v.12a, as Bickell has seen, לόγος σοφοῦ, or rather σοφοῦ, must be right. We also observe at once that ל did not read יִשְׂאָל; Jäger’s conjecture is improbable. What ל read, or conjectured, need not detain us; suffice it that ל does not support ה. I think the right correction for יִשְׂאָל can be found. It is surely יִשְׂאָל (see Ex. 28:11 etc.). Consequently יִשְׂאָל must conceal the name of some precious stone, or the like. יִשְׂאָל is most probably יִשְׂאָל, which means, in Cant. 1:10, not ‘necklaces’ = יִשְׂאָל, but pearls, or beads, strung together (cf. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, s.v.). There remain the three first letters of
these represent רעה. Thus we get as the sense of v.11a, 'A necklace of pearls in sockets of wreathed gold.'

But we see that vs.11a corresponds pretty closely to vs.12a. Therefore vs.11a should correspond to vs.12b. And so most probably it does. בּוּדָה occurs twice over in vs.12b (for בּוּדָה, as Bickell sees, is due to the transposition of the letters בּוּדָה). Read in both passages בּוּדָה (Bickell coincides only as to vs.12a). Oddly enough vs.11a gives בּוּדָה twice over, and vs.12b בּוּדָה virtually twice over. As to the amazing phrase דֹרֵשַׁ עַל עַל, where Schultens sees an allusion to the tropes of elegant oriental style, it is merely a corruption, either of בּוּדָה "(spoken) for its purpose," or "with reference to its purpose," or of בּוּדָה "(spoken) for its purpose," or "with reference to its purpose," which is a weakened form of בּוּדָה. Sense and parallelism alike favour the second alternative.

Read therefore:

The two proverbs, vs.11 and vs.12, are thus in complete correspondence. But perhaps יִשְׁמָשְׁה would be still better than יִשְׁמָשְׁה? The loss of a ' need not startle any one. The sense is, "He who hears with intelligence the words of the wise values them not less than the most costly ornaments." The at first sight startling introduction of the sardius into ג is easily accounted for. It is designed to distinguish ג from ג. Compare Job 31:24 χρυσίων (בּוּדָה), 26 ϧυφω πολυτελεί (בּוּדָה). I have not had the advantage of consulting Baumgarten's Étude critique on the text of Proverbs (1890). But had this learned writer cleared up the passage, our new Hebrew Thesaurus (BDB. Part i., 1892) would, I think, have given us notice of it. Wildeboer's judicious but too brief commentary has nothing new to suggest. He thinks (with BDB., Delitzsch, and Strack) that בּוּדָה = יִשְׁמָשְׁה (1523), which, with vs.17 before us, does not seem very probable.

2. On Psalm lxv. 3.

In the Journal of Biblical Literature, xvii. (1898), pp. 207 f., I have retracted my former view of the meaning of בּוּדָה in Ps. 65:4, which I can no longer use in illustration of the large-hearted utterance in Mal. 111. The short article containing this retraction (along with other things) was written early in 1898. In the summer of the same year I had occasion to return to Ps. 65, and the text presupposed in the rendering given in that article no longer seems to