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Eccles. 7. 29.

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*Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright;
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IN these words you have the result of a serious inquiry into the state of mankind. In the verse immediately foregoing, the preacher speaks his own experience, touching each sex distributively; how rare it was to meet with a wise and good man, how much rarer with a prudent and virtuous woman (so he must be understood, though these qualities are not expressed) then in the text gives this verdict touching both collectively, tending to acquit their Maker of their universal depravation, and convict them. "Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

The words contain two propositions—The first touching man's perfection by his creation, "God made man upright"—The second touching his defection by sin, "But they have sought out many inventions"—Together with a solemn preface introducing both, and recommending them as well-weighed truths, "Lo this only have I found," &c. As though he had said, "I do not now speak at random, and by guess; no, but I solemnly pronounce it, as that which I have found out by serious study and diligent exploration, that God made man upright, &c." The terms are not obscure, and are fitly rendered. I find no considerable variety of readings, and cannot needlessly spend time

about words. Only in short,—By *man* you must understand man collectively, so as to comprehend the whole species.—*Making him upright*, you must understand so as to refer *making* not to the adjunct only, supposing the subject pre-existent, but to both subject and adjunct together; and so it is man's concrete and original righteousness that is here meant.—By *inventions* understand (as the antithesis doth direct) such as are alien from this rectitude. Nor is it altogether improbable that in this expression, some reference may be had to that curious desire of knowing much that tempted Adam and Eve into the first transgression.—*Many inventions*, seems to be spoken in opposition to that simplicity and singleness of heart which this original rectitude did include; truth is but one; falsehood, manifold. God made man upright, that is; simple, plain-hearted, free from all tortuous windings, and involutions (so the word rendered upright in the text doth signify; and Jeshurun derived therefrom, which God thought a fit name for his people Israel, the seed of plain-hearted Jacob to be known by; answerably whereto Nathanael is said to be a true Israelite in whom was no guile, John 1. 47.) Such, man was at first; now in the room of this simplicity, you find a multiplicity; he was of one constant, uniform frame and tenour of spirit, held one straight, direct and even course; now he is become full of inventions, grown various, multiform as to the frame of his spirit, uncertain, intricate, perplexed in all his ways. *Sought out*, this notes the voluntariness, and perfect spontaneity of his defection; it was his own doing. God-made him upright; he hath sought out means to deform and undo himself.—The words thus opened afford us two great gospel truths.—That God endued the nature of man in his creation, with a perfect and universal rectitude.—That man's defection from his primitive state was purely voluntary, and from the unconstrained choice of his own mutable and self-determining will.

Though the latter part of the text, would afford a sufficient ground to treat of the state of man now fallen; yet that being by agreement left to another hand, I observe no more from it then what concerns the manner of his fall, and that only as it depended on a mutable will. In handling these truths, I shall —open them in certain explicatory theses, and—improve them in some few practical and applicatory inferences.

I. These two great gospel truths are to be opened in certain explicatory theses.

First. About the former, —That God endued the nature of man in his creation with a perfect and universal rectitude: take these propositions for explication.

1. All created rectitude consists in conformity to some rule or law. Rectitude is a mere relative thing, and its relation is to a rule. By a rule, I here mean a law strictly taken; and therefore I speak this only of created rectitude. A law, is a rule of duty given by a superior to an inferior; nothing can be in that sense a rule to God, or the measure of increased rectitude.

2. The highest rule of all created rectitude, is the will of God, considered as including most intrinsically, an eternal and immutable reason, justice, and goodness. It is certain; there can be no higher rule to creatures than the divine will; and as certain that the government of God over his creatures, is always reasonable and just and gracious; and that this reasonableness, justice and goodness by which it is so, should be subjected any where but in God himself, none that know what God is according to our more obvious notions of him can possibly think. Rom. 7. 12, 12, 1, 2, Ezek. 18, 25, ch. 33.

3. Any sufficient signification of this will, touching the reasonable creatures duty is a law, indispensibly obliging such a creature. A law is a constitution *de debito*, and it is the legislator's will (not concealed in his own breast, but) duly expressed that makes this constitution, and infers an obligation on the subject.

4. The law given to Adam at his creation was partly natural, given by way of internal impression upon his soul; partly positive given (as is probable) by some more external discovery or revelation. That the main body of laws whereby man was to be governed, should be at first given no other way than by stamping them upon his mind and heart, was a thing congruous enough to his innocent state (as it is to angels and saints in glory) it being then exactly tempered to his nature highly approvable to his reason, (as is evident in that being fallen, his reason ceases not to approve it, Rom. 2, 18.) fully suitable to the inclination and tendency of his will, and not at all regretted by any reluctant principle that might in the least oppose or render him doubtful about his duty.

Yet was it most reasonable also, that some positive commands should be superadded, that God's right of dominion and government over him as Creator, might be more expressly asserted, and he might more fully apprehend his own obligation as a creature to do some things, because it was his Maker's will, as well as others, because they appeared to him in their own nature reasonable and fit to be done; for so the whole of what God requires of man, is fitly distinguished into some things which he commands, because they are just; and some things that are just because he commands them.

5. Adam was endued in his creation, with a sufficient ability and habitude to conform to this whole law, both natural and positive; in which ability and habitude his original rectitude did consist. This proposition carries in it the main truth we have now in hand, therefore requires to be more distinctly insisted on. There are two things in it to be considered.—the thing itself he was endued with: and—the manner of the endowment.

(1.) The thing itself wherewith he was endued, that was uprightness, rectitude, (otherwise called the image of God, though that expression comprehends more than we now speak of, as his immortality, dominion over the inferior creatures, &c.) which uprightness or rectitude consisted in the habitual conformity, or conformability of all his natural powers to this whole law of God; and is therefore considerable two ways, namely, in relation to its subject, and its rule.

[1.] In relation to its subject; that was the whole soul (in some sense it may be said the whole man) even the several powers of it. And here we are led to consider the parts of this rectitude, for it is co-extended (if that phrase may be allowed) with its subject, and lies spread out into the several powers of the soul; for had any power been left destitute of it, such is the frame of man, and the dependance of his natural powers on each other, in order to action, that it had disabled him to obey, and had destroyed his rectitude; for* *bonum non oritur nisi ex causis integris, malum vero ex quovis defectu, good arises only from perfect causes but evil from some defect.* And hence (as Davenant well observes) according to the parts (if I may so speak) of the subject wherein it was, man's original rectitude must be understood to consist of,

First. A perfect illumination of mind to understand and know the will of God. Secondly. A compliance of heart and will therewith. Thirdly. An obedient subordination of the sensitive appetite, and other inferior powers, that in nothing they might resist the former. That it comprehends all these, appears by comparing Col. 3, 10, where the image of God, wherein man was created, is said to consist in knowledge, that hath its seat and subject in the mind, with Eph. 4, 24. where righteousness and holiness are also mentioned; the one whereof consists in equity towards men: the other in loyalty and devotedness to God; both which necessarily suppose the due framing of the other powers of the soul, to the ducture of an enlightened mind. And besides, that work of sanctification

* Davenant de justitia habituali, &c.

(which in these scriptures is expressly called a renovation of man according to the image of God wherein he was created) doth in other scriptures appear (as the forementioned author also observes) to consist of parts proportionable to these I mention, namely, illumination of mind, (Ephes. 1. 18.) conversion of heart (Ps. 51, 10.) victory over concupiscence. Rom. 6. 7. throughout.

[2.] Consider this rectitude in relation to its rule; that is the will of God revealed, (1. John 3. 4.) or the law of God. Sin is the transgression of the law; and accordingly righteousness must needs be conformity to the law; that is, actual righteousness consists in actual conformity to the law; that habitual rectitude which Adam was furnished with in his creation (of which we are speaking) in an habitual conformity, or an ability to conform to the same law. This habitual conformity, was, as of the whole soul, so to the whole law, that is, to both the parts or kinds of it, natural and positive. He was furnished with particular principles inclining him to comply with whatsoever the law of nature had laid before him, and with a general principle disposing him to yield to whatsoever any positive law should lay before him as the will of God. And if it be said (in reference to the former of these) that this law of nature impressed upon Adam's soul, was his very rectitude; therefore how can this rectitude be a conformity to this law? I answer, First—A law is twofold *regulans, regulating—regulata, regulated*. Secondly—The law of nature impressed upon the soul of Adam, must be considered;—as subjected in his mind; so it consisted of certain practical notions about good and evil, right and wrong, &c. and—as subjected in his heart, so it consisted in certain habitual inclinations to conform to those principles. Now these inclinations of the heart, though they are a rule to actions, they are yet something ruled in reference to those notions in the mind; and their conformity thereto makes one part of original rectitude. And those notions, though they are a rule to these inclinations, yet they are something ruled in reference to the will of God signified by them; and in the conformity thereto, consists another part of this original rectitude.

(2.) We have to consider the manner of this endowment. And as to this, it is much disputed among the schoolmen, whether it were natural or supernatural. I shall only lay down in few words, what I conceive to be clear and indisputable.

[1.] If by natural, you mean essential (whether constitutive-ly, or consecutively) so original righteousness was not natural to man, for then he could never have lost it, without the loss of his being.

[2.] If by natural you mean connatural, that is, concreate

with the nature of man, and consonant thereto, so I doubt not but it was natural to him.

6. This rectitude of man's nature, could not but infer and include his actual blessedness, while he should act according to it. According to the tenour of the covenant, it could not but infer it. And consider this rectitude in itself, it must needs include it: the rectitude of his understanding including his knowledge of the highest good; and the rectitude of his will and affections, the acceptance and enjoyment thereof; as Augustine (*de civitate Dei*) in this case, *nullum bonum abesset homini quod recta voluntas optare posset, &c.* No good would be wanting to a man which a well regulated will could wish for. Thus far of the holiness and blessedness of man's first state. It follows to speak of the mutability of it, and of his fall as depending thereon.

Secondly. That man's defection from his primitive state, was merely voluntary, and from the unconstrained choice of his own mutable and self-determining will. For the asserting of this truth, take the following propositions.

1. That the nature of man is now become universally depraved and sinful. This, Scripture is full of,* and experience and common observation put it beyond dispute. It is left then that sin must have had some original among men.

2. The pure and holy nature of God could never be the original of man's sin. This is evident in itself. God disclaims it;† nor can any affirm it of him without denying his very Being. He could not be the cause of unholiness, but by ceasing to be holy, which would suppose him mutably holy; and if either God or man must be confessed mutable, it is no difficulty where to lay it; whatever he is, he is essentially; and necessity of existence, of being always what he is, remains everlastingly the fundamental attribute of his Being. James 1, 17.

3. It is blasphemous and absurd to talk of two principles, (as the Manichees of old) the one good *per se, in itself*, and the cause of all good; the other evil *per se*, and the cause of all evil.

Bradwardine's two arguments: that this would suppose two gods, two independent beings; and that it would suppose an evil god; do sufficiently convince this to be full both of blasphemy and contradiction. Bradwardine *de causa Dei*.

4. It was not possible that either external objects, or the temptation of the devil should necessitate the will of man to sin. External objects could not; for that were to reject all

* 1 Kings 8. 46. Psal. 14, 1. Rom. 3, 12,—&c. cap. 5, 12, 13, &c. 1, John 3, 19, &c.

† Deut. 32, 4. Psal. 5, 4. 3. John 11.

upon God ; for if he create objects with such an allactive power in them, and create such an appetite in man as cannot but work inordinately and sinfully towards those objects, it must needs infer his efficacious necessitation of sin, being it would destroy the truth already established, that God created man with such a recititude as that there was a sufficient ability in his superior powers for the cohibition and restraint of the inferior, that they should not work inordinately towards their objects. The devil could not do it for the same reason, having no way to move the will of man but by the proposal of objects ; yet that by this means (which he could in many respects manage most advantageously) he did much help forward the first sin, Scripture leaves us not to doubt.

5. The whole nature of sin consisting only in a defect, no other cause need be designed of it than a defective ; that is, an understanding, will and inferior powers however originally good yet mutably and defectively so. I shall not insist to prove that sin is no positive being ; but I take the argument to be irrefragable, (notwithstanding the cavils made against it) that is drawn from that common maxim, that *omne ens positivum est vel primum, vel a primo, all positive existence is either first or from the first*. And that of *Dionysius the Areopagite is an ingenious one ; he argues that no being can be evil *per se* : for then it must be immutably, to which no evil can be, for to be always the same, is a certain property of goodness ; it is so even of the highest goodness. And hence sin being supposed only a defect, a soul that is only defectibly holy, might well enough be the cause of it ; that is, the deficient cause. Nor is it in the least strange that man should be at first created with a defectible holiness ; for if he were immutably holy, either it must be *ex natura, of nature*, or *ex gratia ; of grace* ; *ex natura* it could not be, for that would suppose him God ; if it were *ex gratia*, then it must be free ; then it might be, or might not be ; therefore there was no incongruity in it that it should not be. And indeed it was most congruous that God having newly made such a creature, furnished with such powers, so capable of government by a law, of being moved by promises and threats he should for some time hold him as a *viator, traveller*, in a state of trial unconfirmed, (as he did also the innocent angels) that it might be seen how he would behave himself towards his Maker, and that he should be rewardable and punishable accordingly, in a state that should be everlasting and unchangeable : the liberty therefore of the viators and the comprehensors, Gibieuf well distinguishes into *inchoata* or *consummabilis*

* τὸ γὰρ αἰὶ ταυτοῦ τῆ ἀγαθῆ ἰδίου. This is the peculiar nature of goodness. Dion. de Div. nom.

begun, and capable of being consummated; and perfecta or consummata, perfect or consummated; the former such as Adam's was at his creation; the latter such as is the state of angels and saints in glory; and as his would have been had he held out and persisted innocent through the intended time of trial.

It was therefore no strange thing that man should be created defectible; it was as little strange that a defectible creature should *deficere, revolt*. For the manner of that defection, (whether error of the understanding preceded, or inconsideration only, and a neglect of its office) with the great difficulties some imagine herein, I wave discourse about them; judging that advice good and sober, for to consider how sin may be gotten out of the world, than how it came in. Though it is most probable there was in the instant of temptation a mere suspension of the understanding's act, (not as previous to the sin, but as a part of it) and thereupon a sudden precipitation of will, as Estius doth well determine.

6. Man being created mutable as to his holiness, must needs be so as to his happiness too. And that both upon a legal account, (for the law had determined that if he did sin he must die) and also upon a natural; for it was not possible that his soul being once depraved by sin, the powers of it vitiated, their order each to other, and towards their objects broken and interrupted, there should remain a disposition and aptitude to converse with the highest good.

II. The use follows which shall be only in certain practical inferences that will issue from these truths, partly considered singly and severally; partly together and in conjunction.

First. Some inferences issue from these truths considered singly and severally. From the first we infer,

1. Did God create man upright as hath been shown, then how little reason had man to sin? how little reason had he to desert God? to be weary of his first estate? Could God's making him; his making him upright, be a reason why he should sin against him? was his directing his heart, and the natural course of his affections toward himself, a reason why he should forsake him? what was there in his state that should make it grievous to him? was his duty too much for him? God made him upright, so that every part of it was connatural to him; Was his privilege too little? He knew and loved, and enjoyed the highest and infinite good. O think then how unreasonable and disingenuous a thing sin was! that a creature that was nothing but a few hours ago, now a reasonable being, capable of God! yet sin! Urge your hearts with this, we are too apt to

think ourselves unconcerned in Adam's sin; we look upon ourselves too abstractly, we should remember we are members of a community, and it should be grievous to us to think that our species hath dealt so unkindly and unworthily with God: and besides, do not we sin daily after the similitude of Adam's transgression? and is not sin as unreasonable and unjust a thing as ever?

2. Was our primitive state so good and happy, how justly may we reflect and look back towards our first state? how fitly might we take up Job's words? (Job 29. 2, 4, 5,) O that I were as in months past;---As in the days of my youth;---When the Almighty was yet with me!---When I put on righteousness and it clothed me;---When my glory was fresh in me, &c. With what sadness may we call to mind the things that are past, and the beginnings of ancient time? when there was no stain upon our natures, no cloud upon our minds, no pollution upon our hearts; when with pure and undefiled souls we could embrace and rest, and rejoice in the eternal and incomprehensible good? when we remember these things, do not our bowels turn? are not our souls poured out within us? From the second we infer,

1. Did man so voluntarily ruin himself? how unlikely is he now to be his own saviour? he that was a self-destroyer from the beginning, that ruined himself as soon as God had made him, is he likely now to save himself? is it easier for him to recover his station than to have kept it? or hath he improved himself by sinning? and gained strength by his fall for a more difficult undertaking, is he grown better natured towards himself and his God, than he was at first?

2. How little reason hath he to blame God, though he finally perish? what would he have had God to have done more to prevent it; he gave his law to direct him, his threatening to warn him; his promise for his encouragement was evidently implied; his nature was sufficiently disposed to improve and comport with all these; yet he sins! is God to be charged with this? sins upon no necessity, with no pretence; but that he must be seeking out inventions, trying experiments, assaying to better his state, as plainly despising the law, suspecting the truth, envying the greatness, asserting and aspiring to the sovereignty and Godhead of his Maker. Had we (any of us) a mind to contend with God about this matter, how would we order our cause? how would we state our quarrel? if we complain that we should be condemned and ruined all in one man; that is to complain that we are Adam's children. A child might as well complain that he is the son of a beggar or a traitor, and charge it as injustice upon the prince or law of the land that he

is not born to a patrimony; this is a misery to him, but no man will say it is wrong. And can it be said we are wronged by the common Ruler of the world, that we do not inherit from our father, the righteousness and felicity we had wilfully lost long before we were his children? If we think it hard, we should be tied to terms we never consented to, might not an heir as well quarrel with the magistrate, that he suffers him to become liable to his father's debts? and to lie in prison if he have not to pay?

But besides, who can imagine but we should have consented, had all mankind been at that time existent in innocency together? that is, let the case be stated thus; Suppose Adam our common parent, to have had all his children together with him before the Lord, while the covenant of works was not as yet made, and while as yet God was not under any engagement to the children of men: Let it be supposed, that he did propound it to the whole race of mankind together, that he would capitulate with their common parent on their behalf, according to the terms of that first covenant; if he stood they should stand, if he fall, they must all fall with him. Let it be considered, that if this had not been consented to, God might (without the least colour of exception, being as yet under no engagement to the contrary) have annihilated the whole species; for wherein can it seem hard, that what was nothing but the last moment, should the next moment be suffered to relapse into nothing, again? Let it also be considered, that Adam's own personal interest, and a mighty natural affection towards so vast a progeny, might well be thought certainly to engage him to the uttermost care and circumspection on his own and their behalf. It must also be remembered, that all being now in perfect innocency, no defect of reason, no frowardness or perverseness of will can be supposed in any, to hinder their right judgment, and choice of what might appear to be most for their own advantage, and the glory of their Maker.

Can it now possibly be thought (the case being thus stated) that any man should rather choose presently to lose his being, and the pleasures, and hopes of such a state, than to have consented to such terms? It cannot be thought.

For consider the utmost that might be objected; and suppose one thus to reason the matter with himself; "Why? it is a mighty hazard for me to suspend my everlasting happiness or misery upon the uncertain determinations of another man's mutable will; shall I trust my eternal concerns to such a per-adventure, and put my life and hopes into the hands of a fellow-creature?"

It were obvious to him to answer himself, "I, but he is my

father; he bears a natural affection to me, his own concernment is included, he hath power over his own will, his obedience for us all, will be no more difficult than each man's for himself; there is nothing required of him, but what his nature inclines him to, and what his reason (if he use it) will guide him to comply with; and though the hazard of an eternal misery be greatly tremendous; yet are not the hopes of an everlasting blessedness as greatly consolatory and encouraging? and besides, the hazard will be but for a time, which if we pass safely, we shall shortly receive a full and glorious confirmation and advancement." Certainly no reasonable man, all this considered (though there had been no mention made of a means of recovery in case of falling, the consideration whereof is yet also to be taken in by us) would have refused to consent; and then what reasonable man but will confess this to be mere cavil, that we did not personally consent; for if it be certain we should have consented and our own hearts tell us we should, doth the power of a Creator over his creatures, signify so little that he might not take this for an actual consent? for is it not all one, whether you did consent, or certainly would have done it, if you had been treated with? Covenants betwixt superiors and inferiors, differ much from those betwixt equals; for they are laws as well as covenants, and therefore do suppose consent (the terms being *in se* reasonable) as that which not only our interest, but duty would oblige us to. It is not the same thing to covenant with the great God, and with a fellow-creature. God's prescience of the event (besides that no man knows what it is, yet) whatever it is, it is wholly immanent in himself (as also his decrees) therefore could have no influence into the event, or be any cause of it; all depended, as hath been shewn, on man's own will; and therefore if God did foresee that man would fall, yet he knew also, that if he would he might stand.

Secondly. Some inferences arise, from both these doctrines jointly.

1. Were we once so happy; and have we now undone ourselves? how acceptable should this render the means of our recovery to us? That it is a recovery we are to endeavour (which implies the former truth) that supposes us once happy, who would not be taken with such an overture for the regaining of a happiness, which he hath lost and fallen from; it is a double misery to become from a happy estate miserable; it is yet as a double happiness to become happy from such misery; and proportionably valuable should all means appear to us that tend thereto. Yea, and it is a recovery after self-destruction (which asserts the former truth) such a destruction as might reduce us to an utter despair of remedies, as rendering us incapable to

help ourselves, or to expect help or pity from others. O how welcome should the tidings of deliverance now be to us! how joyful an entertainment should our hearts give them upon both these accounts? how greatly doth *Scripture command the love and grace of Christ under the notion of redeeming? a word that doth not signify deliverance from simple misery only, but also connote a precedent better state as they expound it, who take the phrase as Scripture uses it, to allude to the buying out of captives from their bondage. And how should it ravish the heart of any man to have mercy and help offered him by another hand, who hath perished by his own? how taking should gospel-grace be upon this account? how should this consideration engage souls to value and embrace it? it is urged (we see) to that purpose, Hosea 13. 9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help; and verse 10. it follows, I will be thy King; where is any other that will save thee, &c. And ch. 14. 1. O Israel, return unto the Lord, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Now (friends) do but seriously consider this. If you believe the truths you have heard, how precious should Christ be to you! how precious should the gospel, the ordinances, and ministry of it be! Do you complain that formerly you were not treated with? by all these God now treats with you. Now your own personal consent is called for; not to any thing that hath the least of hazard in it, but what shall make you certainly happy, as miserable as you have made yourselves; and there is nothing but your consent wanting; the price of your redemption is already paid; it is but taking Christ for your Saviour and your Lord, and living a life of dependance and holiness for a few days, and you are as safe as if you were in glory; will you now stick at this? O do not destroy yourselves a second time, and make yourselves doubly guilty of your own ruin.

2. Was our state so good, but mutable? what cause have we to admire the grace of God through Christ, that whom it recovers, it confirms? It was a blessed state, that by our own free will we fell from; but how much better (even upon this account) is this, which by God's free grace, we are invited and recalled to?

* Rom. 3. 24. &c. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 31. Eph. 1. 6, 7.
Tit. 2. 11.—14.