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7 **Efficient Photoredox Co-Upcycling of CO<sub>2</sub> and Plastic Waste**  
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9 **by Band-Gap Engineered Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S Catalyst**  
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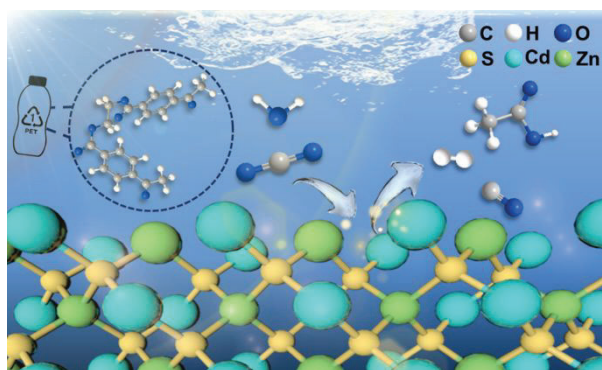
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## ABSTRACT

Solar-driven CO<sub>2</sub> reduction combined with plastic waste valorization presents a versatile approach to simultaneously reset misaligned hydrocarbon resources and achieve a carbon-neutral cycle. Herein, we demonstrate a co-upcycling heterogeneous photoredox catalysis for efficient CO<sub>2</sub> reduction to tunable syngas, integrated with polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic conversion for accessing acetate, over the spherical band-gap engineered Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S catalyst. The key to steering the syngas H<sub>2</sub>/CO rate is to modulate the conduction band bottom potentials of the Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S photocatalysts by altering the Zn/Cd ratio, which results in syngas H<sub>2</sub>/CO production in a wide range. Moreover, controlled variations in the molar ratio of Zn/Cd regulate the electron-hole separation capability, thereby endowing Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S with the optimum syngas and acetate production rates. The underlying mechanistic origin of such a redox reaction involving CO<sub>2</sub>-assisted PET plastic conversion is systematically investigated. This win-win cooperative photoredox catalysis offers a tantalizing possibility for co-upcycling CO<sub>2</sub> and PET into value-added feedstocks.

## TOC GRAPHIC



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Upcycling greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub> into green and sustainable products driven by solar energy is an appealing approach for simultaneously alleviating the environmental energy crisis and tackling carbon neutrality by capturing CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>1-5</sup> Of the various CO<sub>2</sub> reduction products, CO is the two-electron reduction product, and thus a kinetically more viable option compared to CH<sub>4</sub> and CH<sub>3</sub>OH, which require eight and six proton-electron transfers, respectively, to form a molecule.<sup>6-10</sup> More importantly, CO, a key C<sub>1</sub> feedstock, plays an irreplaceable role in the industrial processes in the form of syngas intermediate, a mixture of H<sub>2</sub> and CO, such as gasification of coal and Fischer–Tropsch synthesis.<sup>11,12</sup> Solar-driven CO<sub>2</sub> reduction with H<sub>2</sub>O, known as artificial photosynthesis, wonderfully mimics the masterpiece of nature and admirably achieves renewable and clean syngas production.<sup>1,13-15</sup> However, this real overall reaction is always inefficient or difficult due to the sluggish half-reaction kinetics of O<sub>2</sub>.<sup>11,13</sup> Alternatively, diverse sacrificial reagents (e.g., ascorbic acid, triethanolamine, and methanol) are employed to consume holes to achieve the overall reaction, which undoubtedly results in a waste of oxidation capacity and increases the system cost.<sup>16-18</sup> In this regard, photocatalytic plastic waste valorization, with a dehydrogenation process to reset misaligned hydrocarbon resources, can be deftly combined with CO<sub>2</sub> reduction to constitute a redox cycle, blazing a fascinating trail for the simultaneous co-upcycling of greenhouse gas and plastic waste into beneficial chemicals, like killing two birds with one stone.<sup>19-22</sup>

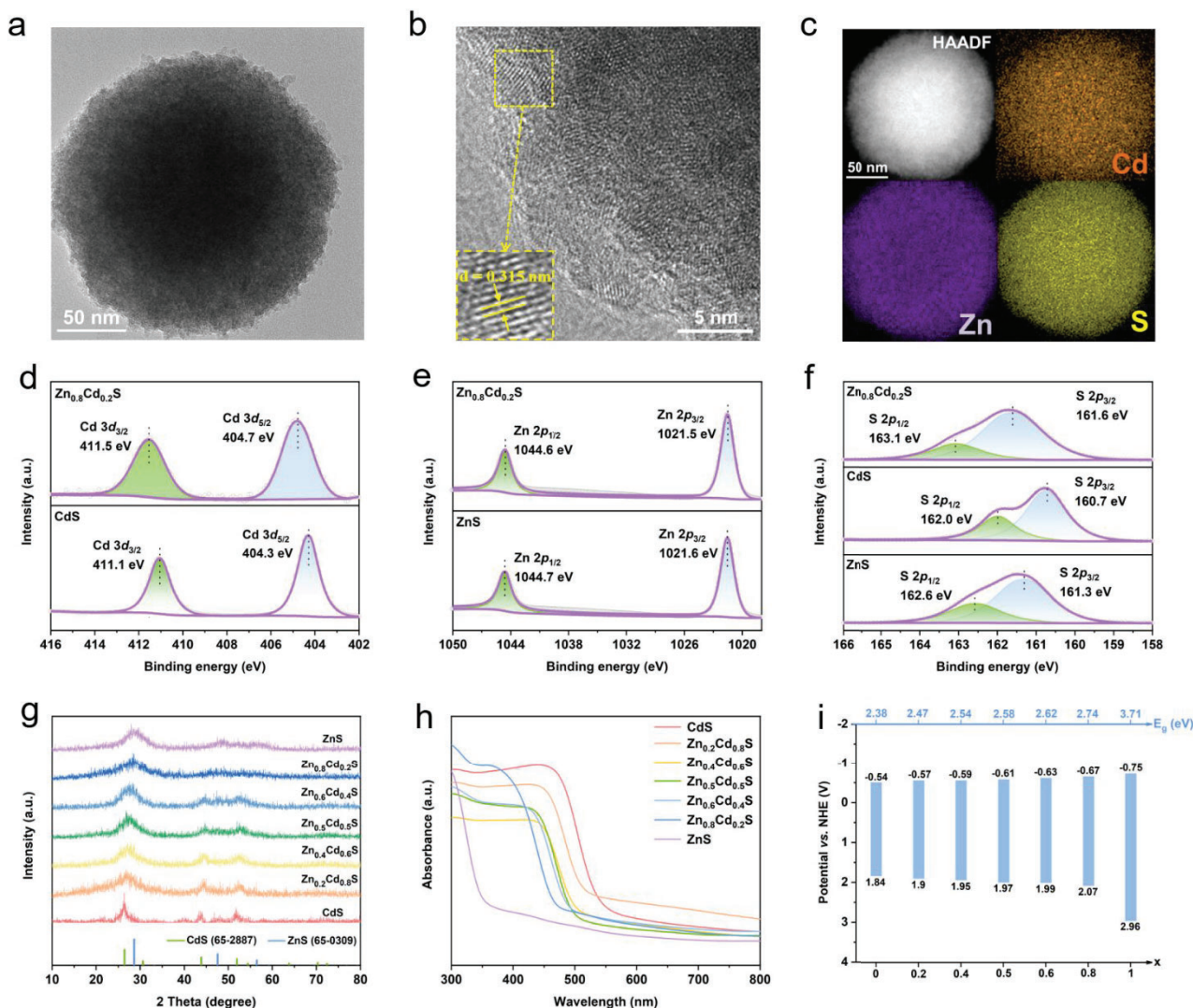
Very recently, the prominent valorization of plastic waste while producing valuable products has become extremely appealing due to the aggravation of “white pollution” and the shortage of resources.<sup>23-25</sup> These mushrooming demonstrations of photocatalytic plastic conversion mainly focus on CdS-based catalysts.<sup>26-28</sup> However, the photogenerated holes in the relatively negative valence band position of CdS are insufficient for completely and efficiently oxidizing the plastics.<sup>13,29,30</sup> Besides, the intrinsic photocorrosion behavior of CdS also significantly constrains its stability for practical applications.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the rational development of a preferable photocatalyst with sufficient oxidation capability and good stability is of crucial importance for photocatalytic upcycling of plastic waste. Notably, Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S (0 ≤ x ≤ 1) formed by the introduction of Zn to CdS, possessing these aforementioned characteristics, has been considered a highly promising platform for improving this redox reaction system.<sup>20</sup> Variations in the molar ratio of Zn/Cd not only modulate the band structure, but also facilitate the electron-hole separation,<sup>19,31-33</sup> which could be used as a feasible strategy for cooperatively tuning CO<sub>2</sub> reduction combined with plastic waste valorization in one photoredox cycle.

In this study, we first report the cooperative co-upcycling of CO<sub>2</sub> and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic into tunable syngas and acetate in one photoredox reaction system by designing spherical Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S photocatalysts with different Zn/Cd molar ratios. The syngas H<sub>2</sub>/CO ratio is well regulated over a wide range, including a ratio of 3:2, which is a desirable composition for alkane synthesis. Mechanistic studies have unambiguously revealed that Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S can efficiently adsorb CO<sub>2</sub> molecules, thus facilitating CO<sub>2</sub> photoreduction along the CO<sub>2</sub> → \*CO<sub>2</sub> → \*COOH → \*CO → CO reaction pathways. Simultaneously, the cooperation of the energetic holes and •OH promotes the conversion of PET to acetate. In addition, the successful and efficient conversion of post-consumer PET plastic concomitantly with CO<sub>2</sub> reduction has revealed the tantalizing possibility of artificial sunlight-driven systems in actual manufacturing industries.

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4 The  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  nanospheres with different Zn/Cd molar ratios ( $x = 0, 0.2, 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.8,$  and  
5 1) have been synthesized following the schematic illustration described in **Figure S1**. For this  
6 synthesis, a facile hydrothermal process with zinc acetate [ $Zn(CH_3COO)_2 \cdot 2H_2O$ ], cadmium acetate  
7 [ $Cd(CH_3COO)_2 \cdot 2H_2O$ ], and thiourea ( $NH_2CSNH_2$ ) as precursors is used.<sup>31</sup> The transmission electron  
8 microscopy (TEM) and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) obviously show the morphologies and  
9 microscopic structures of  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$ . As shown in **Figures 1a** and **S2**, the as-synthesized  
10  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  shows a uniform spherical shape with an average diameter of  $173.5 \pm 6.7$  nm.  
11 High-resolution TEM (HRTEM) image reveals the distinct lattice fringe (**Figure 1b**), where the  
12 interlayer distance of 0.315 nm is indexed to the (111) lattice plane. The (111) lattice spacing of  
13  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  is significantly lower than  $Zn_{0.6}Cd_{0.4}S$  (0.34 nm), and this is attributed to Vegard's law,  
14 as the molar ratio of Zn increases, the lattice distance of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  gradually decreases, thus  
15 indicating a homogeneous structure.<sup>19,31,34</sup> As manifested in **Figure S3**, energy-dispersive X-ray  
16 spectroscopy (EDX) analysis further indicates the existence of S, Cd, and Zn elements. The results of  
17 high-angle annular dark field scanning-TEM (HAADF-STEM) and elemental mapping reconfirm the  
18 successful synthesis of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  photocatalyst (**Figure 1c**).

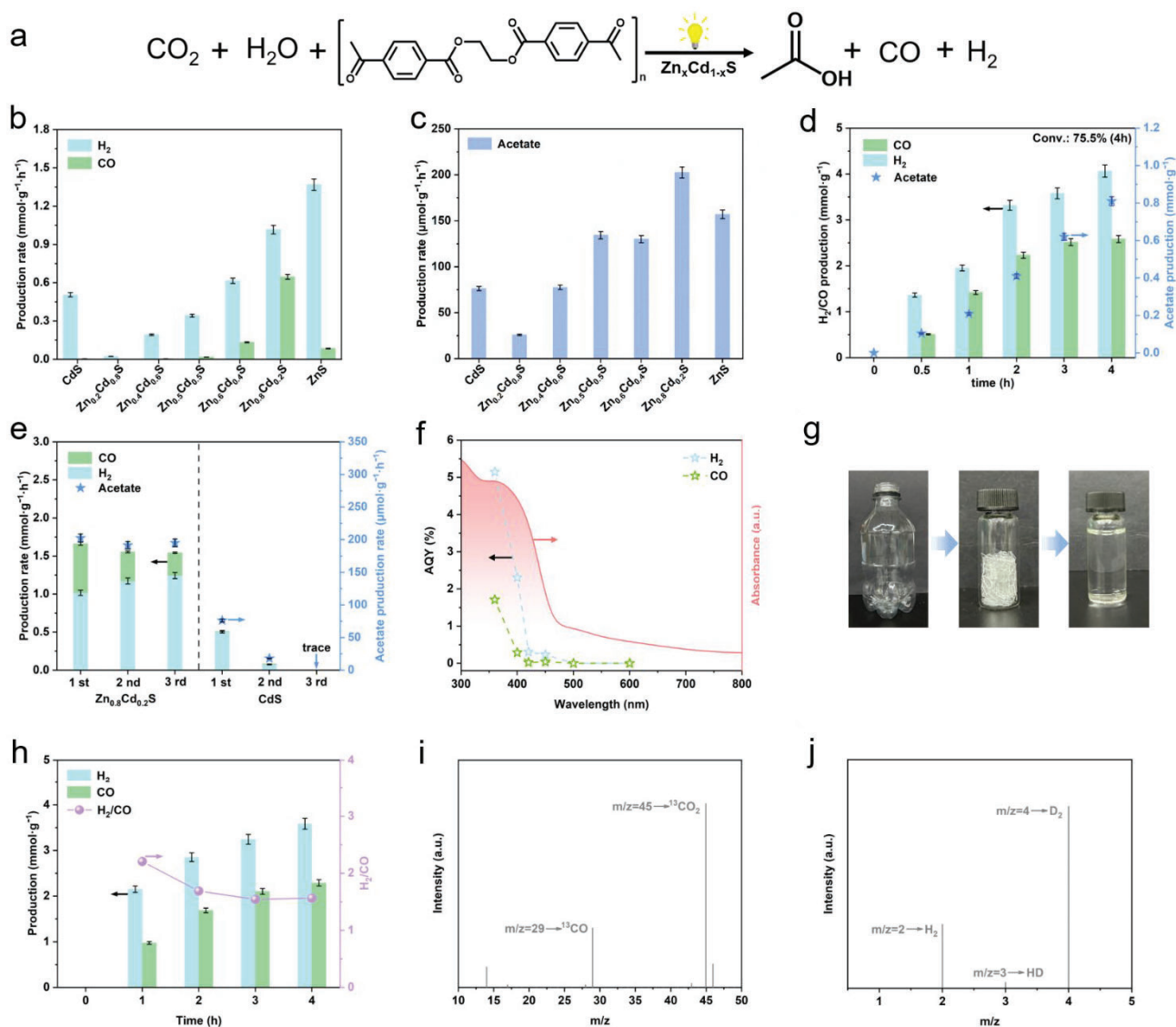
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24 X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) has been performed in order to carefully determine the  
25 valence states and chemical element compositions. The survey spectrum of  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  demonstrates  
26 the coexistence of Zn, Cd, and S (**Figure S4**), which is further corroborated by EDX data. For CdS  
27 and ZnS samples, the characteristic peaks of Cd 3*d* located at 411.1 eV (Cd 3*d*<sub>3/2</sub>) and 404.3 eV (Cd  
28 3*d*<sub>5/2</sub>) are monitored to Cd<sup>2+</sup> valence state (**Figure 1d**), while the Zn 2*p*<sub>1/2</sub> and 2*p*<sub>3/2</sub> binding energies  
29 (1044.7 eV and 1021.6 eV) are ascribed to the Zn<sup>2+</sup> (**Figure 1e**).<sup>35,36</sup> For  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  sample, the S 2*p*  
30 spectrum is deconvoluted into two peaks at 163.1 eV and 161.6 eV, with peak positions between  
31 those of CdS and ZnS (**Figure 1f**). The peak positions of Cd 3*d* show a 0.4 eV shift towards higher  
32 values, and those of Zn 2*p* shift to lower values by 0.1 eV, in comparison to that of CdS and ZnS  
33 samples, respectively. This is due to the charge redistribution between Zn and Cd atoms in the  
34  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  sample.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, to gain the crystal phase information of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$ , X-ray diffraction  
35 (XRD) measurements have been performed (**Figure 1g**).<sup>32</sup> As the Zn to Cd atomic ratio increases,  
36 because the radius of Zn<sup>2+</sup> (0.74 Å) is smaller than that Cd<sup>2+</sup> (0.97 Å),<sup>38,39</sup> a diffraction peak shift to  
37 higher scattering angles is observed, further confirming the synthesis of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  rather than  
38 composites or physical mixtures of CdS and ZnS. As illustrated in **Figure 1h**, the UV/Vis diffuse  
39 reflectance spectrum (DRS) shows that the light absorption edge of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  appears redshifted as  
40 the proportion of Cd increases. Subsequently, we have calculated the band gap energy of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$   
41 based on DRS spectroscopy combined with the Kubelka-Munk method (**Figure S5**);<sup>40</sup> meanwhile,  
42 the conduction band (CB) has been measured by the Mott-Schottky curves, finally obtaining the  
43 energy band structural image (**Figures 1i** and **S6**).<sup>41</sup> The results reveal that both the valence band  
44 (VB) and CB positions become positive with increasing Zn concentration, indicating that the band  
45 structure of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  is modulated flexibly.





**Figure 1.** (a) TEM image, (b) HRTEM image, and (c) HAADF-STEM and the element mapping results of  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$ . XPS spectra of the samples: (d) Cd 3d of  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  and CdS; (e) Zn 2p of  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  and ZnS; (f) S 2p of  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$ , CdS, and ZnS. (g) XRD patterns, (h) DRS spectroscopy, and (i) CB and VB potentials of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$ . The VB potential of  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  is calculated based on the equation  $E_{VB} = E_{CB} + E_g$ .

The photocatalytic assay of  $CO_2$  and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) co-upcycling (**Figure 2a**) in a photoredox system has been carried out under  $CO_2$  atmosphere and Xe-lamp irradiation (**Figure S7**). Initially, taking ethylene glycol (EG) as a model substrate, the optimal reaction conditions have been explored, owing to a large proportion of EG in PET released during alkaline solution pretreatment.<sup>42</sup> As shown in **Figure S8**,  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  exhibits the highest activity. Subsequently, the optimum alkaline reaction condition based on  $Zn_{0.8}Cd_{0.2}S$  has been investigated (**Figure S9**). The resulting syngas production gradually decreases with increasing potassium hydroxide (KOH) concentration, and all of the following experimental pretreatment reaction solutions are diluted to  $1 \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ , taking into account the need for PET pretreatment under harsh alkaline conditions and the need to reduce the corrosiveness and cost of the system.



**Figure 2.** (a) Scheme for co-upcycling of CO<sub>2</sub> and PET plastic. (b) CO/H<sub>2</sub> production rate during photocatalytic conversion of PET over Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S. (c) Acetate production rate during photocatalytic conversion of PET over Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S. (d) Time-yield plots over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S. (e) Recycling performance of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S and CdS. (f) DRS spectrum of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S and AQYs for CO/H<sub>2</sub> production over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S under different monochromatic lights. (g) Pretreatment of used PET bottles. (h) The performance test of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction paired with used PET bottles conversion over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S. (i) Mass spectrum of <sup>13</sup>CO (m/z = 29) and (j) D<sub>2</sub> (m/z = 4) produced over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S in the photocatalytic reduction. Reaction conditions: 10 mg catalysts, 10 mL reaction liquid, full spectrum, irradiation for 4 h.

A series of commercial PET photoactivity tests have been performed under the same conditions with the variation of Zn ratio (**Figures 2b** and **2c**). Commercial PET plastics are pretreated with an alkali solution, and standard samples in the same alkali solution are calibrated to identify the detected substance (**Figures S10-S11**). As confirmed by <sup>1</sup>H nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy, EG and terephthalate (TPA) in PET are released. The significant variability in the amount of EG before and after light illumination, and little variation in the amount of TPA (**Figures S12-S13**),

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3 suggests that the liquid phase product is derived from the oxidation of EG rather than TPA. Similar  
4 to the model reaction,  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$  still maintains the optimal photocatalytic performance, displaying  
5 that the highest production rate of syngas and acetate is  $1.7 \text{ mmol}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$  and  $202.5 \text{ }\mu\text{mol}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$ ,  
6 respectively; moreover, the resulting syngas  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$  ratio is well regulated over a wide range,  
7 including a ratio of 3:2, which is a desirable composition for alkane synthesis (**Figure S14**).<sup>43,44</sup> The  
8  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$  sample exhibits excellent syngas and acetate yields compared to other representative  
9 catalysts (**Table S1**).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopy and ion chromatography detecting  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  concentration  
10 in reaction solution before and after light illumination have indicated that PET is also substantially  
11 converted into  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$  during the reaction (**Figures S15 and S16**). The time profiles in **Figure 2d**  
12 show that the production of acetate and  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$  increases along with time during the reaction, and the  
13 conversion rate of PET reaches 75.5% after 4 h of irradiation. In order to evaluate the stability of  
14  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$ , the cycle experiments have been implemented. As depicted in **Figure 2e**, the production  
15 rate of acetate and  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$  remains stable during long repeated trials, with the slight change in  
16 performance, which could be attributed mainly to the partial loss of the catalyst. The used  
17  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$  still shows a uniform spherical shape (**Figure S17**). A comparison of the XRD patterns  
18 and XPS spectra of the fresh and used  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$  is shown in **Figure S18**, where no significant  
19 deviations are observed, which also suggests the excellent stability of the samples. In distinct  
20 contrast, CdS exhibits poor stability, with an 84% reduction in  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$  production in the second cycle  
21 and a gradual loss of activity in the third cycle. As displayed in **Table S2**, the  $\text{Cd}^{2+}$  leaching results  
22 from the inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometer (ICP-OES) also demonstrate that  
23 the introduction of Zn inhibits the photocorrosion and improves the recovery of samples from the  
24 reaction solvent. In addition, the cyclic stability of ZnS is slightly worse than that  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$   
25 (**Figure S19**). The apparent quantum yields (AQYs) of this reaction are closely associated with the  
26 incident light wavelength while matching well with the UV/Vis DRS result of  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$  (**Figure**  
27 **2f**). Evidently, the syngas has achieved an optimal AQY of 6.85% at  $\lambda = 350 \text{ nm}$ , even exceeding the  
28 single  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction of most reported sacrificial reaction systems (**Table S3**).<sup>11,17</sup> Encouraged by the  
29 potential results above, we have transformed to estimate the catalytic performance of post-consumer  
30 PET plastic bottle conversion integrated with syngas production. The bottles are cut into pieces  
31 (**Figure 2g**) and pretreated under the same condition (**Figures S20 and S21**). As expected, this  
32 reaction delivers efficient conversion over  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$ , with the syngas  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$  ratio stabilizing at 3:2  
33 after 3 h of reaction, and the total production of syngas at 4 h reaches  $5.9 \text{ mmol}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}$ , which closes to  
34 that of commercial PET photocatalytic activity at the same reaction time ( $6.6 \text{ mmol}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}$ ) (**Figure 2h**).  
35 Besides, the acetate production is  $220 \text{ }\mu\text{mol}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}$ , and these results confirm the potential practical  
36 application of  $\text{Zn}_{0.8}\text{Cd}_{0.2}\text{S}$  for co-upcycling of  $\text{CO}_2$  and post-consumer PET plastic waste into  
37 value-added chemicals.  
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50 To demonstrate the redox synergy of  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction and PET plastic valorization, and to explore  
51 the origin of CO and  $\text{H}_2$ , a series of trace and contrast experiments have been carried out. The  
52 isotopic labeling tests directly trace the carbon and hydrogen sources, and validate that the CO  
53 product arises from the photoreduction of externally purged  $\text{CO}_2$  gas and the generated  $\text{H}_2$  mainly  
54 originates from  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  instead of PET constituent monomers, where the spectral signals at  $m/z = 29$   
55 and  $m/z = 4$  are attributed to  $^{13}\text{CO}$  and  $\text{D}_2$ , respectively. (**Figures 2i and 2j**). The reaction in pure  
56 Argon (Ar) indicates that only trace amounts of CO ( $0.9 \text{ }\mu\text{mol}$ ) are observed, proving that CO from  
57 the PET overoxidation is negligible (**Figure S22**).<sup>45,46</sup> Subsequently, the solutions containing PET  
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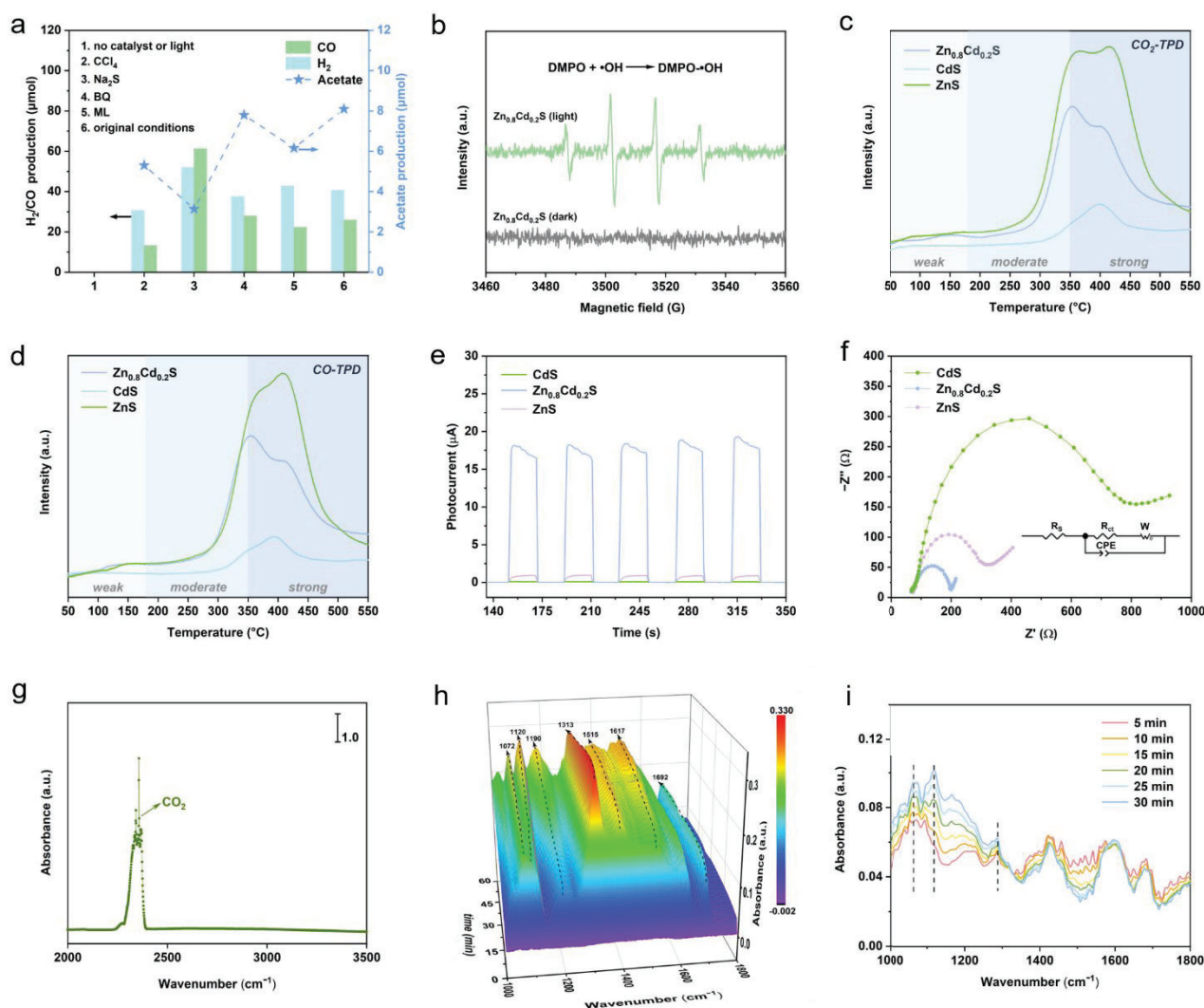


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3 are further substituted with H<sub>2</sub>O, and the comparison reaction of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction with H<sub>2</sub>O oxidation  
4 has been carried out (**Figure S23**). Due to the sluggish kinetics of O<sub>2</sub> evolution, the syngas H<sub>2</sub>/CO  
5 production is significantly reduced when H<sub>2</sub>O becomes the proton source. This result confirms that  
6 the introduction of PET consumes holes to produce acetate, thus overcoming the sluggish kinetics of  
7 O<sub>2</sub> evolution in the CO<sub>2</sub> conversion process and improving syngas production.  
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11 In order to clarify the underlying reaction mechanism of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in combination with  
12 PET conversion, we have performed a wide range of control experiments under a variety of  
13 conditions, as disclosed in **Figure 3a**. The removal of light or catalyst contributes to the disruption of  
14 the reaction (entry 1 in **Figure 3a**), indicating that this is a Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S induced photoredox process.  
15 The introduction of the electron scavenger CCl<sub>4</sub> significantly constrains the H<sub>2</sub>/CO production (entry  
16 2 in **Figure 3a**), suggesting that photogenerated electrons play an integral part in the syngas  
17 production. Acetate production is reduced by 61% after the addition of the hole scavenger Na<sub>2</sub>S  
18 (entry 3 in **Figure 3a**), unambiguously revealing the crucial role of photoexcited holes in the  
19 selective production of acetate by PET. Generally, benzoquinone (BQ) can be used as •O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>  
20 scavenger, and the production of acetate does not change significantly after BQ adding this reaction  
21 system, which indicates the absence of •O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> (entry 4 in **Figure 3a**).<sup>47</sup> Subsequently, to explore the  
22 role of •OH in the PET conversion process, methanol (ML) as •OH scavenger is added to the  
23 reaction system, and the electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) test with  
24 5,5-dimethyl-1-pyrrolin-N-oxide (DMPO) as a •OH trapping agent is carried out. As depicted in  
25 entry 5 in **Figure 3a**, the acetate production is decreased by only 24%. Significantly, no EPR  
26 characteristic signal peak of CdS, ZnS and Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S is observed in the dark, and obvious •OH  
27 signals of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S are detected under full spectrum irradiation (**Figures 3b** and **S24**).<sup>19</sup> These  
28 above results have validated that •OH is also involved in the PET conversion process, but  
29 photogenerated holes dominate the activity and selectivity in the process.  
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37 The above photoactivity test information has demonstrated the tunability of syngas H<sub>2</sub>/CO  
38 enabled by tuning the Zn ratio from 0 to 1. To gain insight into the origin of the changes in syngas  
39 production, the CO<sub>2</sub>/CO TPD analyses of the as-prepared samples have been carried out. As shown  
40 in **Figures 3c** and **S25**, the peaks of CO<sub>2</sub> desorption on the catalysts can be approximately separated  
41 into three regions (50 °C - 180 °C, 180 °C - 350 °C and > 350 °C), corresponding to weak, moderate,  
42 and strong CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption sites, respectively.<sup>48,49</sup> No significant peak in CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption is observed  
43 in the CdS sample. Evidently, the CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption capacity for Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S in medium and strong  
44 parts (180 °C - 550 °C) is lower than that of ZnS. On the other hand, Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S also possesses a  
45 weaker CO adsorption capacity compared to those for ZnS (**Figure 3d**), indicating that the formed  
46 CO is easier to desorption on the surface of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S. Besides, transient photocurrent responses  
47 and electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) have been conducted in order to explore the  
48 dynamic behaviors of charge separation and transportation. As disclosed in **Figures 3e** and **3f**, the  
49 Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S sample has a faster charge carrier separation rate and lower charge transfer resistance  
50 than CdS and ZnS.<sup>50,51</sup> Moreover, the dynamic behaviors of charge separation and transportation  
51 have been explored by the time-resolved photoluminescence (TRPL) spectra (**Figure S26**). As  
52 shown in **Table S4**, the average lifetime of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S (τ<sub>a</sub> = 3.13 ns) is shorter than that of CdS (τ<sub>a</sub> =  
53 3.98 ns) and ZnS (τ<sub>a</sub> = 3.57 ns). The shortening of the decay lifetime confirms that Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S has a  
54 more rapid interfacial charge transfer. Upon gathering the above results, we can draw the conclusion  
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that variations in the molar ratio of Zn/Cd not only modulate the band structure and charge carrier separation capability, improving the photoredox-catalyzed performance, but also regulate CO<sub>2</sub>/CO adsorption, tuning the syngas CO/H<sub>2</sub> ratio over a wide range.

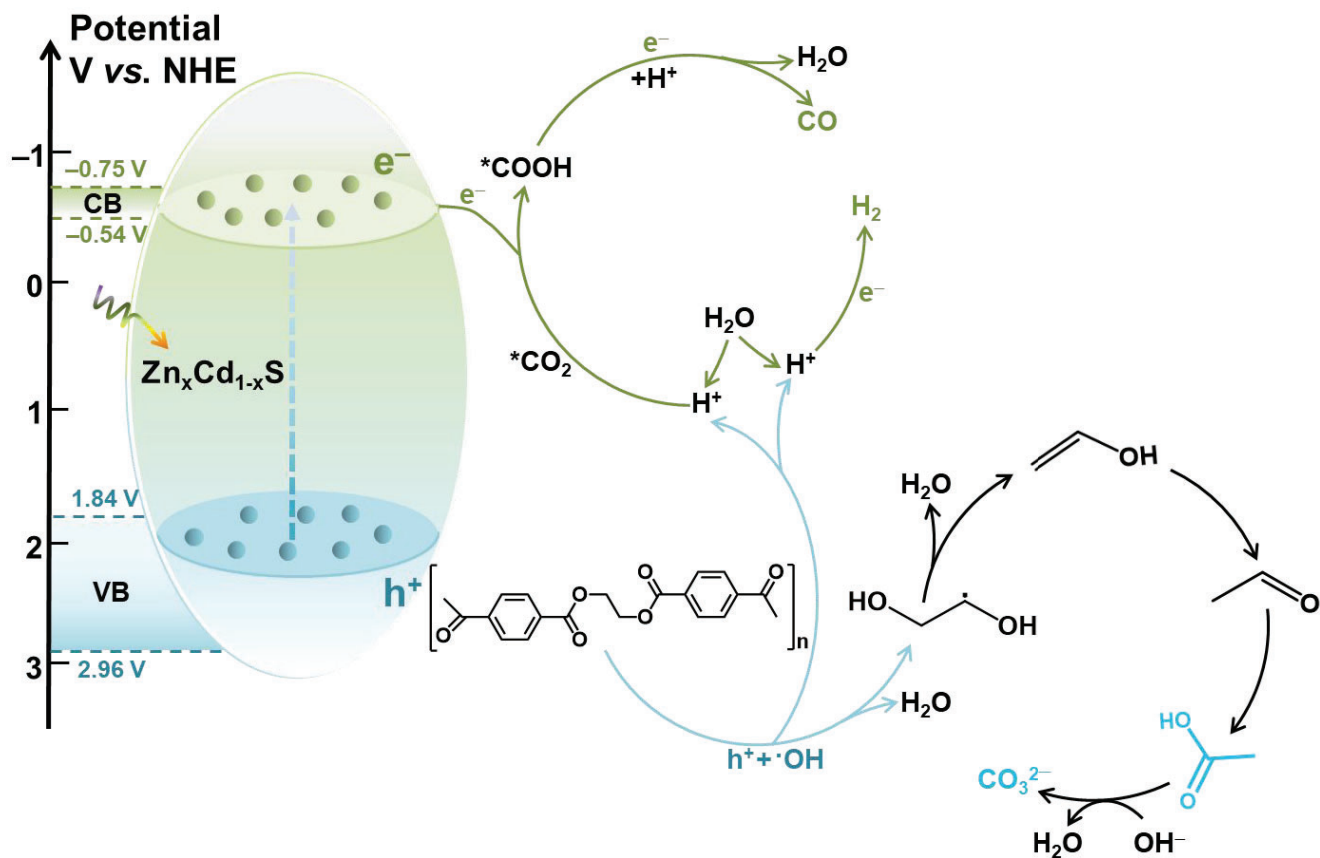


**Figure 3.** (a) Controlled tests over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S under various reaction conditions. (b) EPR spectra of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S using DMPO as the trapping agents (dark and light). (c) CO<sub>2</sub>-TPD and (d) CO-TPD analyses over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S, CdS, and ZnS. (e) Transient photocurrent responses of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S, CdS, and ZnS. (f) EIS Nyquist plots of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S, CdS, and ZnS. (g) In situ FT-IR spectroscopy of CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption. Time-resolved in situ FTIR spectra of (h) the photocatalytic CO<sub>2</sub> reduction paired with PET conversion and (i) PET conversion in Ar atmosphere over Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S.

In situ Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR) analysis has been evaluated to trace the reaction intermediates and dynamical transformation of the surface-adsorbed species during this co-upcycling cooperative reaction. CO<sub>2</sub> molecules adsorption over the Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S surface has been first employed by successively purging with CO<sub>2</sub> for 20 min in the dark, and the emergence of IR characteristic CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption peaks in the 2250 - 2400 cm<sup>-1</sup> range has indicated that CO<sub>2</sub> molecules are readily adsorbed on the surface of Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S (Figure 3g).<sup>52,53</sup> Upon light irradiation, CO<sub>2</sub> reduction intermediates, including CO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> (1190 and 1692 cm<sup>-1</sup>), \*COOH (1515 and 1617 cm<sup>-1</sup>), and

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3 \*HCOOH (1313  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ), are obviously detected (**Figure 3h**).<sup>54,55</sup> The continuous increase of  
4 intermediates peak intensity over a period of 60 min strongly supports the  $\text{CO}_2$  reaction pathway:  
5  $\text{CO}_2 \rightarrow * \text{CO}_2 \rightarrow * \text{COOH} \rightarrow * \text{CO} \rightarrow \text{CO}$ . In particular, the other two FT-IR signals at 1072 and  
6 1120  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  may arise from the primary alcohol in the PET conversion process.<sup>47</sup> To eliminate the  
7 effect of  $\text{CO}_2$  intermediates and confirm the PET conversion process, the FT-IR analysis is  
8 performed again with Ar gas. As disclosed in **Figure 3i**, both peaks can still be clearly observed, and  
9 the ever-increasing strength of the peaks is a good indication that PET produces the intermediates of  
10 primary alcohol. Surprisingly, a peak of increasing intensity around 1300  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  can still be observed,  
11 which is attributed to the production of vinyl alcohol.<sup>56</sup> Subsequently, the vinyl alcohol is converted  
12 to acetaldehyde because of the existence of keto-enol tautomerism.<sup>57</sup> Acetaldehyde is oxidized to  
13 acetate, and then under the alkaline condition part of the acetate is further decarboxylated to form  
14  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$ , which has been confirmed by the simulated experiment of acetate oxidation (**Figure S27**).<sup>58</sup>

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20 Based on the aforementioned discussion, a logical and plausible mechanism for the  
21 co-upcycling of  $\text{CO}_2$  and PET into syngas and acetate catalyzed by  $\text{Zn}_x\text{Cd}_{1-x}\text{S}$  has been proposed  
22 (**Figure 4**). Under optical irradiation,  $\text{Zn}_x\text{Cd}_{1-x}\text{S}$  absorbs the incident light and then the photoexcited  
23 electrons in the VB migrate to its CB, while holes are reserved in the VB and part of them oxidize  
24  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  to  $\bullet\text{OH}$ . The pretreated PET is first oxidized by holes and  $\bullet\text{OH}$  into vinyl alcohol through the  
25 primary alcohol. Subsequently, the resulting vinyl alcohol is converted to acetaldehyde, followed by  
26 the oxidation of acetaldehyde to acetate. Part of the acetate is desorbed from the surface of  
27 photocatalyst, and the remaining acetate adsorbed on  $\text{Zn}_x\text{Cd}_{1-x}\text{S}$  is further oxidized to form  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$ . At  
28 the same time,  $\text{CO}_2$  passes through  $\text{CO}_2 \rightarrow * \text{CO}_2 \rightarrow * \text{COOH} \rightarrow * \text{CO} \rightarrow \text{CO}$  pathway for CO  
29 production, and protons extracted from  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  and PET are reduced to  $\text{H}_2$  by collaboration with  
30 electrons, resulting in the formation of the tunable syngas  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$ .  
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**Figure 4.** Proposed mechanism for the co-upcycling of CO<sub>2</sub> and PET into syngas and acetate catalyzed by Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S.

In summary, we have demonstrated an effective heterogeneous photoredox-catalyzed system for the co-upcycling of CO<sub>2</sub> and PET into syngas and acetate catalyzed by Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S with a tunable band structure. The band structure of Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S photocatalysts is flexibly modulated by altering the Zn/Cd ratio, which results in the syngas H<sub>2</sub>/CO production in a wide range. In addition, variations in the molar ratio of Zn/Cd also regulate the electron-hole separation ability, endowing Zn<sub>0.8</sub>Cd<sub>0.2</sub>S with a highly effective charge carrier separation and transfer rate, thus exhibiting the excellent production rate of syngas and acetate. It is anticipated that this work provides a robust and proficient strategy for the heterogeneous coupling photocatalysis of merging PET conversion with CO<sub>2</sub> reduction into tunable syngas and acetate in a single redox reaction system by solar energy.

### Experimental Section

**Synthesis of Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S.** Uniform Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S nanospheres were synthesized using the co-precipitation method.<sup>31</sup> Typically, a certain amount of Cd(CH<sub>3</sub>COO)<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O and Zn(CH<sub>3</sub>COO)<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O were mixed into 60 mL EG under constant magnetic stirring. After 2 h, then 0.15 g NH<sub>2</sub>CSNH<sub>2</sub> and 0.3 g PVP (M<sub>w</sub> = 58000) were added. After ultrasound and stirring for 20 min at room temperature, the obtained transparent solution was then placed in a 100 mL capacity Teflon-lined stainless steel autoclave and maintained at 150 °C for 24 h, promoting the growth of Zn<sub>x</sub>Cd<sub>1-x</sub>S. After being cooled down, the precipitate was washed three times and dried under vacuum

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3 for 6 h to obtain the final product. In addition, the  $x$  in  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$  refers to the different molar ratios  
4 of Zn ( $x = 0, 0.2, 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.8, \text{ and } 1$ ).  
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7 **Photoactivity Tests.** Photocatalytic  $CO_2$  reduction integrated with PET conversion was undertaken  
8 in a double-walled quartz reactor equipped with a flow-through water device to maintain room  
9 temperature. Typically, 10 mg catalysts were added into a mixture of PET pretreatment solution (1  
10 mL) and deionized (DI) water (9 mL). The obtained homogeneous suspending solution was purged  
11 with  $CO_2$  gas for 30 min. Subsequently, the full spectrum irradiation was carried out for 4 h. In the  
12 control experiment, sacrificial agents  $CCl_4$ ,  $Na_2S$  and ML were used at 0.1 mmol. The 300 W  
13 Xe-lamp (CEL-HXF300-T3, Beijing China Education Au-light Co., Ltd., China) was used as a light  
14 source, and the light power density is measured to be approximately  $300 \text{ mW cm}^{-2}$ . The gas  
15 production was quantified by a gas chromatograph (Shimadzu GC-8A 2014C). The liquid phase  
16 products were qualitatively analyzed by  $^1H$  NMR spectroscopy (JNM-ECZ600R), in which maleic  
17 anhydride was used as the internal-standard. The conversion (%) is calculated as  $(n_0 - n)/n_0 \times 100\%$ ,  
18 where  $n_0$  and  $n$  denote the molar amount of EG originally and finally, respectively.  
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## 24 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### 25 **Supporting Information.**

26 The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <http://pubs.acs.org>.  
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29 Additional experimental details, characterization (crystal structures, morphologies, and optical  
30 absorption properties) and photoactivity results of the obtained sample. Energy band structure of  
31  $Zn_xCd_{1-x}S$ , photoelectrochemical measurements of various samples.  
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### Author Contributions

Z.-R.T. and Y.-J.X. proposed the research direction and supervised the project. Y.Z. designed and performed the experiments. Y.Z., M.-Y.Q., Z.-R.T., and Y.-J.X. and wrote and revised the manuscript. M.C. provided helpful suggestions. All authors participated in discussion and reviewed the paper before submission.

### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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