370 To Pull (*Trahere*)

According to the naturalists,[[1]](#endnote-1) three things attract naturally: the like, heat, and a vacuum. So, in spiritual matters a like attracts by reason of piety, the warm by reason of charity, a vacuum by reason of poverty and need.

Concerning the first, because food received in an animal is the like feeding nature. Therefore, nature attracts itself and converts nature into itself, and how much more alike, so much the sooner is it attracted. But spiritually a person draws to his affection similar persons, Eccli. 27[:10]: “Birds resort unto their like.” The example of David, 1 Kings [18:3], who attracted to his love Jonathan and the same [1 Kings] 22[:2]: “All that were in distress and oppressed with debt, and under affliction of mind gathered themselves unto him: and he became their prince.” So, Christ and the pious prelate attract to themselves underlings, John 6[:44]: “No man comes to me, except the Father, draw him.”

¶ Concerning the second, the sun by its heat attracts to itself humidity in vapor form, so the charitable attract to themselves the charitable and those of grace, Jer. 31[:3]: “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn you, taking pity.” Note here concerning the onager whom lacking his companion ascends onto the mountain and by the attraction of odor finds his companion, [Jer. 2:24]. So, Christ ascending on mount Olivet found his companion, that is, a man recently lost to whom he emptied himself and was made a companion. For Christ said, John 12[:32]: “If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.” Who therefore is not drawn by Christ, it is a sign that he is nothing and not one of all. So, Paul was drawn by Christ so that he might draw to Christ. If therefore we consider the Magdalen, the thief, and Paul, we will see that Christ sometimes from his mercy punishes when he corrects the sinner and spares from injustice, however he indulges the penitent, and both proceed from love. When therefore he draws the sinner thus to justify him, it is more to justify than to create, since grace is greater than nature. For nothing stands in the way of the one creating because according to the Psal. [32:9]: “He spoke, and they were made, he commanded, and they were created.” But sin and an evil will resist the one justifying.

¶ Concerning the third, because according to the Philosopher,[[2]](#endnote-2) nature abhors a vacuum, and draws to itself what is near. And especially with the greater matter going out, there enters what is more subtle. But it is evident from the air to the water, from the water to the earth. For example, if a concave container made from earth, well-sealed with wax, and carried to the sea for a week it will be filled with sweet water. So, an empty person and pure from worldly infection, if he is carried among the bitterness of the world, he draws to himself the sweetness of divine grace. Wherefore he attracts to himself others, so Christ coming and empty of earthly belongings attracted to himself the poor disciples who attracted to themselves the whole world. Wherefore the spouse in the Canticles affecting such an attraction says, Can. 1[:3]: “Draw me: we will run after you to the odor of your ointments.” The empty one runs better than the full one, just so it is evident concerning hunting dogs. And it is to be known here that something that is empty cannot fill another empty container. Rather the empty container would split open, but temporal things are as if empty containers, Jer. 4[:23]: “I beheld the earth, and lo it was void, and nothing.” Here I wander, they cannot fill the human heart, but only God, who is immediately superior to the soul itself, fills when it is empty from the love of the world.

¶ The figure for this in 4 Kings 4[:3-7] if the woman had the empty vessels oil flowed, when they were full it stopped. So, God gives his grace to empty hearts, [1] Cor. 15[:10]: “The grace of God in me has not been void.” And because there is no grace where there is vacuity as is evident in the figure, Exod. 27[:6-8] the altars of the old testament had to be hollow and empty as a sign that law was not conferring grace. And it is here to be noted that Christ triply draws men to himself, namely, by the collation of benefits, by the sending in of tribulations, and by the inspiration of devotion, about which, John 12[:32]: “If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.” Here he says all things not everything, suggesting by this the integrity of nature, namely, for assuming the body and soul.

Therefore, concerning the first attraction it is said in Jer. 31[:3]: “I have loved you with an everlasting love, taking pity on you.” But it is concerning God drawing to that place, just as from the diamond stone and the magnet, according to Augustine, *De civitate*,[[3]](#endnote-3) of which both attract iron, but with the diamond present it empties the magnet. But if the iron is moved elsewhere or the precious diamond, nothing works and this on account of the repulsion of the thing joined.

Concerning the second, because God sometimes draws by devotion, it is to be known that he wants to force no one violently. Wherefore Augustine, *De civitate*,[[4]](#endnote-4) just as animals are drawn by the sight of flourishing foliage, and boys by apples, so the soul by devotion, Can. 1[:3]: “Draw me: we will run after you to the odor of your ointments.” Wherefore Augustine, *Super Joannem*, homily 16,[[5]](#endnote-5) it is said significantly “after you,” not before you, nor I will make you a follower, not next to you, nor I will make you an equal to me, but “after you” so that I may show you the teacher and the leader, Psal. [62:9]: “My soul hath stuck close to you.” But concerning many it is just as the Barnacle Goose,[[6]](#endnote-6) which however small, it would be great that we may eat it, he who has the tree from which it is born. But when it grows old hardly may it hang by the beak and finally it falls in the water, Psal. [72:9]: “They have set their mouth against heaven: and their tongue has passed through the earth.”

Again, it is read concerning the panther,[[7]](#endnote-7) that when he sleeps for three days and three nights, awakened, he emits a sweet cry to which the other animals and by its shining lair are affected and inclined. So, it is concerning Christ who after three days of his death emitted this voice, [Mark. 16:16]: “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.” To which voice all are made Christians. Similarly, Pliny the Elder says,[[8]](#endnote-8) concerning the whale fish that when it is hungry, it emits a sweet odor from its mouth through which it draws little fish into its mouth. So, Christ emits his sweet sound attracting many, namely, [Matt. 11:28]: “Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you,” etc.

¶ Again, Christ attracts us in three ways: vigor, heat, and odor. Vigor just as the magnet to iron. Heat just as the fire to vapor. Odor just as grass to the lamb, grazing land to the hart.

Concerning the first, that the magnet attracts iron it is rare because it has much of the nature of iron. So, Christ has much in himself of human nature, not easily does it attract unless he may find a barrier, Prov. [8:31]: “My delights were to be with the children of men.” But iron when it is turned about to others it is not attracted, so the sinner by Christ until he is purified.

Concerning the second, Christ attracts man by the heat of charity, just as the sun to the dew, unless he may bind a barrier through the sin of cold sloth. The example of the “idle servant,” [Eccli. 37:14].

¶ Third, he draws us by the odor of benefits, just as the eagle provokes its chicks to fly by the showing of foods, Deut. 32[:11]: “As the eagle enticing her young to fly and hovering over them.”

1. Cf. Hugh of Sancto Charo, *Super Apocalypsim,* cap. 8: Tria enim naturaliter attrahunt: scilicet vacuum, calidum et simile: et ipse fuit ibe vacuus per humilitatem.

[Hugo de Sancto Charo (?), Expositio super Apocalysim, cap. 8-11 (corpusthomisticum.org)](https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/x1a08.html) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Aristotle, *Physics* 4.6-9 213a11-217b28. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21.4 (PL 41:714): et tenuerit sub argento, ferrumque super argentum posuerit; deinde sicut subter movebat manum, qua lapidem tenebat, ita ferrum desuper movebatur, atque argento medio nihilque patiente, concitatissimo cursu ac recursu infra lapis ab homine, supra ferrum rapiebatur a lapide. Dixi quod ipse conspexi, dixi quod ab illo audivi, cui tanquam ipse viderim credidi. Quid etiam de isto magnete legerim dicam. Quando juxta eum ponitur adamas, non rapit ferrum; et si jam rapuerat, ut ei appropinquaverit, mox remittit. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, cf. Virgil *Eclogues* 2.65 Trahit sua quemque voluptas aspice, aratra iugo referunt suspensa iuvenci,

Everyone is dragged on by their favorite pleasure. See, the bullocks drag home by the yoke the hanging plough, [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium* 3.7 (PL 35:1399): Joannes testimonium perhibet de ipso, et clamat dicens, Hic erat quem dixi, Qui post me venit, ante me factus est. Post me venit, et praecessit me. Quid est, ante me factus est? Praecessit me: non, factus est antequam factus essem ego; sed, antepositus est mihi: hoc est, ante me factus est. Quare ante te factus est, cum post te venerit? Quia prior me erat. Prior te, o Joannes? Quid magnum, si prior te? Bene, quia tu illi perhibes testimonium: audiamus ipsum dicentem, Et ante Abraham ego sum (Joan. VIII, 58). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. John Mandeville, *Travels*, 29 ed. A. W. Pollard (London: Macmillan, 1900) p. 174: For I told them that in our country were trees that bear a fruit that become birds flying, and those that fell in the water live, and they fall on the earth die anon, and be right good to man’s meat. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. Philip de Thaun [c. 1121 CE] (Bestiaire) ( Allen translation): … When the bold animal / rises up / gloriously endowed / on the third day / suddenly from sleep / a sound comes / of voices sweetest, / through the wild beasts mouth; / after the voice / an odour comes out / from the plain / a steam more grateful, / sweeter and stronger / than every perfume, / than blooms of plants / and forest leaves, / nobler than all / earths ornaments.

<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast79.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Pliny, cf. Guillaume le Clerc [13th century CE] (Bestiaire): … When the fish is hungry it opens its mouth very wide, and breathes forth an exceedingly sweet odor. Then all the little fish stream thither, and, allured by the sweet smell, crowd into its throat. Then the whale closes its jaws and swallows them into its stomach, which is as wide as a valley. (Kuhns translation).

<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast282.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)