

THIRD PART, QUESTION 75

Of the Change of Bread and Wine Into the Body and Blood of Christ (In Eight Articles)

We have to consider the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; under which head there are eight points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether the substance of bread and wine remain in this sacrament after the consecration?*
- (2) Whether it is annihilated?
- (3) Whether it is changed into the body and blood of Christ?
- (4) Whether the accidents remain after the change?
- (5) Whether the substantial form remains there?
- (6) Whether this change is instantaneous?
- (7) Whether it is more miraculous than any other change?
- (8) By what words it may be suitably expressed?

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Whether the body of Christ be in this sacrament in very truth, or merely as in a figure or sign?

IIIa q. 75 a. 1

Objection 1. It seems that the body of Christ is not in this sacrament in very truth, but only as in a figure, or sign. For it is written (Jn. 6:54) that when our Lord had uttered these words: “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood,” etc., “Many of His disciples on hearing it said: ‘this is a hard saying’”: to whom He rejoined: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing”: as if He were to say, according to Augustine’s exposition on Ps. 4[†]: “Give a spiritual meaning to what I have said. You are not to eat this body which you see, nor to drink the blood which they who crucify Me are to spill. It is a mystery that I put before you: in its spiritual sense it will quicken you; but the flesh profiteth nothing.”

Objection 2. Further, our Lord said (Mat. 28:20): “Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” Now in explaining this, Augustine makes this observation (Tract. xxx in Joan.): “The Lord is on high until the world be ended; nevertheless the truth of the Lord is here with us; for the body, in which He rose again, must be in one place; but His truth is spread abroad everywhere.” Therefore, the body of Christ is not in this sacrament in very truth, but only as in a sign.

Objection 3. Further, no body can be in several places at the one time. For this does not even belong to an angel; since for the same reason it could be everywhere. But Christ’s is a true body, and it is in heaven. Consequently, it seems that it is not in very truth in the sacrament of the altar, but only as in a sign.

Objection 4. Further, the Church’s sacraments are ordained for the profit of the faithful. But according to Gregory in a certain Homily (xxviii in Evang.), the ruler is rebuked “for demanding Christ’s bodily presence.” Moreover the apostles were prevented from receiving the Holy Ghost because they were attached to His bodily presence, as Augustine says on Jn. 16:7: “Except I go, the Paraclete will not come to you” (Tract. xciv in Joan.). Therefore Christ is not in the sacrament of the altar according to His bodily presence.

On the contrary, Hilary says (De Trin. viii): “There is no room for doubt regarding the truth of Christ’s body and blood; for now by our Lord’s own declaring and by our faith His flesh is truly food, and His blood is truly drink.” And Ambrose says (De Sacram. vi): “As the Lord Jesus Christ is God’s true Son so is it Christ’s true flesh which we take, and His true blood which we drink.”

I answer that, The presence of Christ’s true body and blood in this sacrament cannot be detected by sense, nor understanding, but by faith alone, which rests upon Divine authority. Hence, on Lk. 22:19: “This is My body which shall be delivered up for you,” Cyril says: “Doubt not whether this be true; but take rather the Saviour’s words with faith; for since He is the Truth, He lieth not.”

Now this is suitable, first for the perfection of the New Law. For, the sacrifices of the Old Law contained only in figure that true sacrifice of Christ’s Passion, according to Heb. 10:1: “For the law having a shadow of the good

* The titles of the Articles here given were taken by St. Thomas from his Commentary on the Sentences (Sent. iv, D, 90). However, in writing the Articles he introduced a new point of inquiry, that of the First Article; and substituted another division of the matter under discussion, as may be seen by referring to the titles of the various Articles. Most editions have ignored St. Thomas’s original division, and give the one to which he subsequently adhered. † On Ps. 98:9

things to come, not the very image of the things.” And therefore it was necessary that the sacrifice of the New Law instituted by Christ should have something more, namely, that it should contain Christ Himself crucified, not merely in signification or figure, but also in very truth. And therefore this sacrament which contains Christ Himself, as Dionysius says (Eccl. Hier. iii), is perfective of all the other sacraments, in which Christ’s virtue is participated.

Secondly, this belongs to Christ’s love, out of which for our salvation He assumed a true body of our nature. And because it is the special feature of friendship to live together with friends, as the Philosopher says (Ethic. ix), He promises us His bodily presence as a reward, saying (Mat. 24:28): “Where the body is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.” Yet meanwhile in our pilgrimage He does not deprive us of His bodily presence; but unites us with Himself in this sacrament through the truth of His body and blood. Hence (Jn. 6:57) he says: “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” Hence this sacrament is the sign of supreme charity, and the uplifter of our hope, from such familiar union of Christ with us.

Thirdly, it belongs to the perfection of faith, which concerns His humanity just as it does His Godhead, according to Jn. 14:1: “You believe in God, believe also in Me.” And since faith is of things unseen, as Christ shows us His Godhead invisibly, so also in this sacrament He shows us His flesh in an invisible manner.

Some men accordingly, not paying heed to these things, have contended that Christ’s body and blood are not in this sacrament except as in a sign, a thing to be rejected as heretical, since it is contrary to Christ’s words. Hence Berengarius, who had been the first deviser of this heresy, was afterwards forced to withdraw his error, and to acknowledge the truth of the faith.

Reply to Objection 1. From this authority the aforesaid heretics have taken occasion to err from evilly understanding Augustine’s words. For when Augustine says: “You are not to eat this body which you see,” he means

not to exclude the truth of Christ’s body, but that it was not to be eaten in this species in which it was seen by them. And by the words: “It is a mystery that I put before you; in its spiritual sense it will quicken you,” he intends not that the body of Christ is in this sacrament merely according to mystical signification, but “spiritually,” that is, invisibly, and by the power of the spirit. Hence (Tract. xxvii), expounding Jn. 6:64: “the flesh profiteth nothing,” he says: “Yea, but as they understood it, for they understood that the flesh was to be eaten as it is divided piecemeal in a dead body, or as sold in the shambles, not as it is quickened by the spirit. . . Let the spirit draw nigh to the flesh. . . then the flesh profiteth very much: for if the flesh profiteth nothing, the Word had not been made flesh, that It might dwell among us.”

Reply to Objection 2. That saying of Augustine and all others like it are to be understood of Christ’s body as it is beheld in its proper species; according as our Lord Himself says (Mat. 26:11): “But Me you have not always.” Nevertheless He is invisibly under the species of this sacrament, wherever this sacrament is performed.

Reply to Objection 3. Christ’s body is not in this sacrament in the same way as a body is in a place, which by its dimensions is commensurate with the place; but in a special manner which is proper to this sacrament. Hence we say that Christ’s body is upon many altars, not as in different places, but “sacramentally”: and thereby we do not understand that Christ is there only as in a sign, although a sacrament is a kind of sign; but that Christ’s body is here after a fashion proper to this sacrament, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 4. This argument holds good of Christ’s bodily presence, as He is present after the manner of a body, that is, as it is in its visible appearance, but not as it is spiritually, that is, invisibly, after the manner and by the virtue of the spirit. Hence Augustine (Tract. xxvii in Joan.) says: “If thou hast understood” Christ’s words spiritually concerning His flesh, “they are spirit and life to thee; if thou hast understood them carnally, they are also spirit and life, but not to thee.”

Whether in this sacrament the substance of the bread and wine remains after the consecration?

IIIa q. 75 a. 2

Objection 1. It seems that the substance of the bread and wine does remain in this sacrament after the consecration: because Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iv): “Since it is customary for men to eat bread and drink wine, God has wedded his Godhead to them, and made them His body and blood”: and further on: “The bread of communion is not simple bread, but is united to the Godhead.” But wedding together belongs to things actually existing. Therefore the bread and wine are at the same time, in this

sacrament, with the body and the blood of Christ.

Objection 2. Further, there ought to be conformity between the sacraments. But in the other sacraments the substance of the matter remains, like the substance of water in Baptism, and the substance of chrism in Confirmation. Therefore the substance of the bread and wine remains also in this sacrament.

Objection 3. Further, bread and wine are made use of in this sacrament, inasmuch as they denote ecclesiastical

unity, as “one bread is made from many grains and wine from many grapes,” as Augustine says in his book on the Creed (Tract. xxvi in Joan.). But this belongs to the substance of bread and wine. Therefore, the substance of the bread and wine remains in this sacrament.

On the contrary, Ambrose says (De Sacram. iv): “Although the figure of the bread and wine be seen, still, after the Consecration, they are to be believed to be nothing else than the body and blood of Christ.”

I answer that, Some have held that the substance of the bread and wine remains in this sacrament after the consecration. But this opinion cannot stand: first of all, because by such an opinion the truth of this sacrament is destroyed, to which it belongs that Christ’s true body exists in this sacrament; which indeed was not there before the consecration. Now a thing cannot be in any place, where it was not previously, except by change of place, or by the conversion of another thing into itself; just as fire begins anew to be in some house, either because it is carried thither, or because it is generated there. Now it is evident that Christ’s body does not begin to be present in this sacrament by local motion. First of all, because it would follow that it would cease to be in heaven: for what is moved locally does not come anew to some place unless it quit the former one. Secondly, because every body moved locally passes through all intermediary spaces, which cannot be said here. Thirdly, because it is not possible for one movement of the same body moved locally to be terminated in different places at the one time, whereas the body of Christ under this sacrament begins at the one time to be in several places. And consequently it remains that Christ’s body cannot begin to be anew in this sacrament

except by change of the substance of bread into itself. But what is changed into another thing, no longer remains after such change. Hence the conclusion is that, saving the truth of this sacrament, the substance of the bread cannot remain after the consecration.

Secondly, because this position is contrary to the form of this sacrament, in which it is said: “This is My body,” which would not be true if the substance of the bread were to remain there; for the substance of bread never is the body of Christ. Rather should one say in that case: “Here is My body.”

Thirdly, because it would be opposed to the veneration of this sacrament, if any substance were there, which could not be adored with adoration of latria.

Fourthly, because it is contrary to the rite of the Church, according to which it is not lawful to take the body of Christ after bodily food, while it is nevertheless lawful to take one consecrated host after another. Hence this opinion is to be avoided as heretical.

Reply to Objection 1. God “wedded His Godhead,” i.e. His Divine power, to the bread and wine, not that these may remain in this sacrament, but in order that He may make from them His body and blood.

Reply to Objection 2. Christ is not really present in the other sacraments, as in this; and therefore the substance of the matter remains in the other sacraments, but not in this.

Reply to Objection 3. The species which remain in this sacrament, as shall be said later (a. 5), suffice for its signification; because the nature of the substance is known by its accidents.

Whether the substance of the bread or wine is annihilated after the consecration of this sacrament, or dissolved into their original matter?

IIIa q. 75 a. 3

Objection 1. It seems that the substance of the bread is annihilated after the consecration of this sacrament, or dissolved into its original matter. For whatever is corporeal must be somewhere. But the substance of bread, which is something corporeal, does not remain, in this sacrament, as stated above (a. 2); nor can we assign any place where it may be. Consequently it is nothing after the consecration. Therefore, it is either annihilated, or dissolved into its original matter.

Objection 2. Further, what is the term “wherefrom” in every change exists no longer, except in the potentiality of matter; e.g. when air is changed into fire, the form of the air remains only in the potentiality of matter; and in like fashion when what is white becomes black. But in this sacrament the substance of the bread or of the wine is the term “wherefrom,” while the body or the blood of Christ is the term “whereunto”: for Ambrose says in De

Officiis (De Myster. ix): “Before the blessing it is called another species, after the blessing the body of Christ is signified.” Therefore, when the consecration takes place, the substance of the bread or wine no longer remains, unless perchance dissolved into its (original) matter.

Objection 3. Further, one of two contradictories must be true. But this proposition is false: “After the consecration the substance of the bread or wine is something.” Consequently, this is true: “The substance of the bread or wine is nothing.”

On the contrary, Augustine says (q. 83): “God is not the cause of tending to nothing.” But this sacrament is wrought by Divine power. Therefore, in this sacrament the substance of the bread or wine is not annihilated.

I answer that, Because the substance of the bread and wine does not remain in this sacrament, some, deeming that it is impossible for the substance of the bread and

wine to be changed into Christ's flesh and blood, have maintained that by the consecration, the substance of the bread and wine is either dissolved into the original matter, or that it is annihilated.

Now the original matter into which mixed bodies can be dissolved is the four elements. For dissolution cannot be made into primary matter, so that a subject can exist without a form, since matter cannot exist without a form. But since after the consecration nothing remains under the sacramental species except the body and the blood of Christ, it will be necessary to say that the elements into which the substance of the bread and wine is dissolved, depart from thence by local motion, which would be perceived by the senses. In like manner also the substance of the bread or wine remains until the last instant of the consecration; but in the last instant of the consecration there is already present there the substance of the body or blood of Christ, just as the form is already present in the last instant of generation. Hence no instant can be assigned in which the original matter can be there. For it cannot be said that the substance of the bread or wine is dissolved gradually into the original matter, or that it successively quits the species, for if this began to be done in the last instant of its consecration, then at the one time under part of the host there would be the body of Christ together with the substance of bread, which is contrary to what has been said above (a. 2). But if this begin to come to pass before the consecration, there will then be a time in which under one part of the host there will be neither the substance of bread nor the body of Christ, which is not fitting. They seem indeed to have taken this into careful

consideration, wherefore they formulated their proposition with an alternative viz. that (the substance) may be annihilated. But even this cannot stand, because no way can be assigned whereby Christ's true body can begin to be in this sacrament, except by the change of the substance of bread into it, which change is excluded the moment we admit either annihilation of the substance of the bread, or dissolution into the original matter. Likewise no cause can be assigned for such dissolution or annihilation, since the effect of the sacrament is signified by the form: "This is My body." Hence it is clear that the aforesaid opinion is false.

Reply to Objection 1. The substance of the bread or wine, after the consecration, remains neither under the sacramental species, nor elsewhere; yet it does not follow that it is annihilated; for it is changed into the body of Christ; just as if the air, from which fire is generated, be not there or elsewhere, it does not follow that it is annihilated.

Reply to Objection 2. The form, which is the term "wherfrom," is not changed into another form; but one form succeeds another in the subject; and therefore the first form remains only in the potentiality of matter. But here the substance of the bread is changed into the body of Christ, as stated above. Hence the conclusion does not follow.

Reply to Objection 3. Although after the consecration this proposition is false: "The substance of the bread is something," still that into which the substance of the bread is changed, is something, and consequently the substance of the bread is not annihilated.

Whether bread can be converted into the body of Christ?

IIIa q. 75 a. 4

Objection 1. It seems that bread cannot be converted into the body of Christ. For conversion is a kind of change. But in every change there must be some subject, which from being previously in potentiality is now in act. because as is said in Phys. iii: "motion is the act of a thing existing in potentiality." But no subject can be assigned for the substance of the bread and of the body of Christ, because it is of the very nature of substance for it "not to be in a subject," as it is said in Praedic. iii. Therefore it is not possible for the whole substance of the bread to be converted into the body of Christ.

Objection 2. Further, the form of the thing into which another is converted, begins anew to inhere in the matter of the thing converted into it: as when air is changed into fire not already existing, the form of fire begins anew to be in the matter of the air; and in like manner when food is converted into non-pre-existing man, the form of the man begins to be anew in the matter of the food. Therefore, if bread be changed into the body of Christ, the form of

Christ's body must necessarily begin to be in the matter of the bread, which is false. Consequently, the bread is not changed into the substance of Christ's body.

Objection 3. Further, when two things are diverse, one never becomes the other, as whiteness never becomes blackness, as is stated in Phys. i. But since two contrary forms are of themselves diverse, as being the principles of formal difference, so two signate matters are of themselves diverse, as being the principles of material distinction. Consequently, it is not possible for this matter of bread to become this matter whereby Christ's body is individuated, and so it is not possible for this substance of bread to be changed into the substance of Christ's body.

On the contrary, Eusebius Emesenus says: "To thee it ought neither to be a novelty nor an impossibility that earthly and mortal things be changed into the substance of Christ."

I answer that, As stated above (a. 2), since Christ's true body is in this sacrament, and since it does not begin

to be there by local motion, nor is it contained therein as in a place, as is evident from what was stated above (a. 1, ad 2), it must be said then that it begins to be there by conversion of the substance of bread into itself.

Yet this change is not like natural changes, but is entirely supernatural, and effected by God's power alone. Hence Ambrose says [(De Sacram. iv): "See how Christ's word changes nature's laws, as He wills: a man is not wont to be born save of man and woman: see therefore that against the established law and order a man is born of a Virgin": and]* (De Myster. iv): "It is clear that a Virgin begot beyond the order of nature: and what we make is the body from the Virgin. Why, then, do you look for nature's order in Christ's body, since the Lord Jesus was Himself brought forth of a Virgin beyond nature?" Chrysostom likewise (Hom. xlvii), commenting on Jn. 6:64: "The words which I have spoken to you," namely, of this sacrament, "are spirit and life," says: i.e. "spiritual, having nothing carnal, nor natural consequence; but they are rent from all such necessity which exists upon earth, and from the laws here established."

For it is evident that every agent acts according as it is in act. But every created agent is limited in its act, as being of a determinate genus and species: and consequently the action of every created agent bears upon some determinate act. Now the determination of every thing in actual existence comes from its form. Consequently, no natural or created agent can act except by changing the form in something; and on this account every change made according to nature's laws is a formal change. But God is infinite act, as stated in the Ia, q. 7, a. 1; q. 26, a. 2; hence His action extends to the whole nature of being. Therefore He can work not only formal conversion, so that diverse

forms succeed each other in the same subject; but also the change of all being, so that, to wit, the whole substance of one thing be changed into the whole substance of another. And this is done by Divine power in this sacrament; for the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of Christ's body, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance of Christ's blood. Hence this is not a formal, but a substantial conversion; nor is it a kind of natural movement: but, with a name of its own, it can be called "transubstantiation."

Reply to Objection 1. This objection holds good in respect of formal change, because it belongs to a form to be in matter or in a subject; but it does not hold good in respect of the change of the entire substance. Hence, since this substantial change implies a certain order of substances, one of which is changed into the other, it is in both substances as in a subject, just as order and number.

Reply to Objection 2. This argument also is true of formal conversion or change, because, as stated above (ad 1), a form must be in some matter or subject. But this is not so in a change of the entire substance; for in this case no subject is possible.

Reply to Objection 3. Form cannot be changed into form, nor matter into matter by the power of any finite agent. Such a change, however, can be made by the power of an infinite agent, which has control over all being, because the nature of being is common to both forms and to both matters; and whatever there is of being in the one, the author of being can change into whatever there is of being in the other, withdrawing that whereby it was distinguished from the other.

Whether the accidents of the bread and wine remain in this sacrament after the change?

IIIa q. 75 a. 5

Objection 1. It seems that the accidents of the bread and wine do not remain in this sacrament. For when that which comes first is removed, that which follows is also taken away. But substance is naturally before accident, as is proved in Metaph. vii. Since, then, after consecration, the substance of the bread does not remain in this sacrament, it seems that its accidents cannot remain.

Objection 2. Further, there ought not to be any deception in a sacrament of truth. But we judge of substance by accidents. It seems, then, that human judgment is deceived, if, while the accidents remain, the substance of the bread does not. Consequently this is unbecoming to this sacrament.

Objection 3. Further, although our faith is not subject to reason, still it is not contrary to reason, but above it, as

was said in the beginning of this work (Ia, q. 1, a. 6, ad 2; a. 8). But our reason has its origin in the senses. Therefore our faith ought not to be contrary to the senses, as it is when sense judges that to be bread which faith believes to be the substance of Christ's body. Therefore it is not befitting this sacrament for the accidents of bread to remain subject to the senses, and for the substance of bread not to remain.

Objection 4. Further, what remains after the change has taken place seems to be the subject of change. If therefore the accidents of the bread remain after the change has been effected, it seems that the accidents are the subject of the change. But this is impossible; for "an accident cannot have an accident" (Metaph. iii). Therefore the accidents of the bread and wine ought not to remain in this

* The passage in the brackets is not in the Leonine edition

sacrament.

On the contrary, Augustine says in his book on the Sentences of Prosper (Lanfranc, De Corp. et Sang. Dom. xiii): “Under the species which we behold, of bread and wine, we honor invisible things, i.e. flesh and blood.”

I answer that, It is evident to sense that all the accidents of the bread and wine remain after the consecration. And this is reasonably done by Divine providence. First of all, because it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood. And therefore Christ’s flesh and blood are set before us to be partaken of under the species of those things which are the more commonly used by men, namely, bread and wine. Secondly, lest this sacrament might be derided by unbelievers, if we were to eat our Lord under His own species. Thirdly, that while we receive our Lord’s body and blood invisibly, this may redound to the merit of faith.

Reply to Objection 1. As is said in the book De Causis, an effect depends more on the first cause than on the second. And therefore by God’s power, which is the first cause of all things, it is possible for that which follows to remain, while that which is first is taken away.

Reply to Objection 2. There is no deception in this sacrament; for the accidents which are discerned by the senses are truly present. But the intellect, whose proper object is substance as is said in De Anima iii, is preserved by faith from deception.

And this serves as answer to the third argument; because faith is not contrary to the senses, but concerns things to which sense does not reach.

Reply to Objection 4. This change has not properly a subject, as was stated above (a. 4, ad 1); nevertheless the accidents which remain have some resemblance of a subject.

Whether the substantial form of the bread remains in this sacrament after the consecration?

IIIa q. 75 a. 6

Objection 1. It seems that the substantial form of the bread remains in this sacrament after the consecration. For it has been said (a. 5) that the accidents remain after the consecration. But since bread is an artificial thing, its form is an accident. Therefore it remains after the consecration.

Objection 2. Further, the form of Christ’s body is His soul: for it is said in De Anima ii, that the soul “is the act of a physical body which has life in potentiality”. But it cannot be said that the substantial form of the bread is changed into the soul. Therefore it appears that it remains after the consecration.

Objection 3. Further, the proper operation of a thing follows its substantial form. But what remains in this sacrament, nourishes, and performs every operation which bread would do were it present. Therefore the substantial form of the bread remains in this sacrament after the consecration.

On the contrary, The substantial form of bread is of the substance of bread. But the substance of the bread is changed into the body of Christ, as stated above (Aa. 2,3,4). Therefore the substantial form of the bread does not remain.

I answer that, Some have contended that after the consecration not only do the accidents of the bread remain, but also its substantial form. But this cannot be. First of all, because if the substantial form of the bread were to remain, nothing of the bread would be changed into the body of Christ, excepting the matter; and so it would follow that it would be changed, not into the whole body of Christ, but into its matter, which is repugnant to the form of the sacrament, wherein it is said: “This is My

body.”

Secondly, because if the substantial form of the bread were to remain, it would remain either in matter, or separated from matter. The first cannot be, for if it were to remain in the matter of the bread, then the whole substance of the bread would remain, which is against what was said above (a. 2). Nor could it remain in any other matter, because the proper form exists only in its proper matter. But if it were to remain separate from matter, it would then be an actually intelligible form, and also an intelligence; for all forms separated from matter are such.

Thirdly, it would be unbefitting this sacrament: because the accidents of the bread remain in this sacrament, in order that the body of Christ may be seen under them, and not under its proper species, as stated above (a. 5).

And therefore it must be said that the substantial form of the bread does not remain.

Reply to Objection 1. There is nothing to prevent art from making a thing whose form is not an accident, but a substantial form; as frogs and serpents can be produced by art: for art produces such forms not by its own power, but by the power of natural energies. And in this way it produces the substantial forms of bread, by the power of fire baking the matter made up of flour and water.

Reply to Objection 2. The soul is the form of the body, giving it the whole order of perfect being, i.e. being, corporeal being, and animated being, and so on. Therefore the form of the bread is changed into the form of Christ’s body, according as the latter gives corporeal being, but not according as it bestows animated being.

Reply to Objection 3. Some of the operations of bread follow it by reason of the accidents, such as to affect

the senses, and such operations are found in the species of the bread after the consecration on account of the accidents which remain. But some other operations follow the bread either by reason of the matter, such as that it is changed into something else, or else by reason of the substantial form, such as an operation consequent upon

its species, for instance, that it “strengthens man’s heart” (Ps. 103:15); and such operations are found in this sacrament, not on account of the form or matter remaining, but because they are bestowed miraculously upon the accidents themselves, as will be said later (q. 77, a. 3, ad 2,3; Aa. 5,6).

Whether this change is wrought instantaneously?

IIIa q. 75 a. 7

Objection 1. It seems that this change is not wrought instantaneously, but successively. For in this change there is first the substance of bread, and afterwards the substance of Christ’s body. Neither, then, is in the same instant, but in two instants. But there is a mid-time between every two instants. Therefore this change must take place according to the succession of time, which is between the last instant in which the bread is there, and the first instant in which the body of Christ is present.

Objection 2. Further, in every change something is “in becoming” and something is “in being.” But these two things do not exist at the one time for, what is “in becoming,” is not yet, whereas what is “in being,” already is. Consequently, there is a before and an after in such change: and so necessarily the change cannot be instantaneous, but successive.

Objection 3. Further, Ambrose says (De Sacram. iv) that this sacrament “is made by the words of Christ.” But Christ’s words are pronounced successively. Therefore the change takes place successively.

On the contrary, This change is effected by a power which is infinite, to which it belongs to operate in an instant.

I answer that, A change may be instantaneous from a threefold reason. First on the part of the form, which is the terminus of the change. For, if it be a form that receives more and less, it is acquired by its subject successively, such as health; and therefore because a substantial form does not receive more and less, it follows that its introduction into matter is instantaneous.

Secondly on the part of the subject, which sometimes is prepared successively for receiving the form; thus water is heated successively. When, however, the subject itself is in the ultimate disposition for receiving the form, it receives it suddenly, as a transparent body is illuminated suddenly. Thirdly on the part of the agent, which possesses infinite power: wherefore it can instantly dispose the matter for the form. Thus it is written (Mk. 7:34) that when Christ had said, “‘Ephpheta,’ which is ‘Be thou opened,’ immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed.”

For these three reasons this conversion is instantaneous. First, because the substance of Christ’s body which

is the term of this conversion, does not receive more or less. Secondly, because in this conversion there is no subject to be disposed successively. Thirdly, because it is effected by God’s infinite power.

Reply to Objection 1. Some* do not grant simply that there is a mid-time between every two instants. For they say that this is true of two instants referring to the same movement, but not if they refer to different things. Hence between the instant that marks the close of rest, and another which marks the beginning of movement, there is no mid-time. But in this they are mistaken, because the unity of time and of instant, or even their plurality, is not taken according to movements of any sort, but according to the first movement of the heavens, which is the measure of all movement and rest.

Accordingly others grant this of the time which measures movement depending on the movement of the heavens. But there are some movements which are not dependent on the movement of the heavens, nor measured by it, as was said in the Ia, q. 53, a. 3 concerning the movements of the angels. Hence between two instants responding to those movements there is no mid-time. But this is not to the point, because although the change in question has no relation of itself to the movement of the heavens, still it follows the pronouncing of the words, which (pronouncing) must necessarily be measured by the movement of the heavens. And therefore there must of necessity be a mid-time between every two signate instants in connection with that change.

Some say therefore that the instant in which the bread was last, and the instant in which the body of Christ is first, are indeed two in comparison with the things measured, but are one comparatively to the time measuring; as when two lines touch, there are two points on the part of the two lines, but one point on the part of the place containing them. But here there is no likeness, because instant and time is not the intrinsic measure of particular movements, as a line and point are of a body, but only the extrinsic measure, as place is to bodies.

Hence others say that it is the same instant in fact, but another according to reason. But according to this it would follow that things really opposite would exist together; for diversity of reason does not change a thing ob-

* Cf. Albert the Great, Sent. iv, D, 11; St. Bonaventure, Sent., iv, D, 11

jectively.

And therefore it must be said that this change, as stated above, is wrought by Christ's words which are spoken by the priest, so that the last instant of pronouncing the words is the first instant in which Christ's body is in the sacrament; and that the substance of the bread is there during the whole preceding time. Of this time no instant is to be taken as proximately preceding the last one, because time is not made up of successive instants, as is proved in Phys. vi. And therefore a first instant can be assigned in which Christ's body is present; but a last instant cannot be assigned in which the substance of bread is there, but a last time can be assigned. And the same holds good in natural

changes, as is evident from the Philosopher (Phys. viii).

Reply to Objection 2. In instantaneous changes a thing is "in becoming," and is "in being" simultaneously; just as becoming illuminated and to be actually illuminated are simultaneous: for in such, a thing is said to be "in being" according as it now is; but to be "in becoming," according as it was not before.

Reply to Objection 3. As stated above (ad 1), this change comes about in the last instant of the pronouncing of the words. For then the meaning of the words is finished, which meaning is efficacious in the forms of the sacraments. And therefore it does not follow that this change is successive.

Whether this proposition is false: "The body of Christ is made out of bread"?

IIIa q. 75 a. 8

Objection 1. It seems that this proposition is false: "The body of Christ is made out of bread." For everything out of which another is made, is that which is made the other; but not conversely: for we say that a black thing is made out of a white thing, and that a white thing is made black: and although we may say that a man becomes black still we do not say that a black thing is made out of a man, as is shown in Phys. i. If it be true, then, that Christ's body is made out of bread, it will be true to say that bread is made the body of Christ. But this seems to be false, because the bread is not the subject of the making, but rather its term. Therefore, it is not said truly that Christ's body is made out of bread.

Objection 2. Further, the term of "becoming" is something that is, or something that is "made." But this proposition is never true: "The bread is the body of Christ"; or "The bread is made the body of Christ"; or again, "The bread will be the body of Christ." Therefore it seems that not even this is true: "The body of Christ is made out of bread."

Objection 3. Further, everything out of which another is made is converted into that which is made from it. But this proposition seems to be false: "The bread is converted into the body of Christ," because such conversion seems to be more miraculous than the creation of the world, in which it is not said that non-being is converted into being. Therefore it seems that this proposition likewise is false: "The body of Christ is made out of bread."

Objection 4. Further, that out of which something is made, can be that thing. But this proposition is false: "Bread can be the body of Christ." Therefore this is likewise false: "The body of Christ is made out of bread."

On the contrary, Ambrose says (De Sacram. iv): "When the consecration takes place, the body of Christ is made out of the bread."

I answer that, This conversion of bread into the body of Christ has something in common with creation, and

with natural transmutation, and in some respect differs from both. For the order of the terms is common to these three; that is, that after one thing there is another (for, in creation there is being after non-being; in this sacrament, Christ's body after the substance of bread; in natural transmutation white after black, or fire after air); and that the aforesaid terms are not coexistent.

Now the conversion, of which we are speaking, has this in common with creation, that in neither of them is there any common subject belonging to either of the extremes; the contrary of which appears in every natural transmutation.

Again, this conversion has something in common with natural transmutation in two respects, although not in the same fashion. First of all because in both, one of the extremes passes into the other, as bread into Christ's body, and air into fire; whereas non-being is not converted into being. But this comes to pass differently on the one side and on the other; for in this sacrament the whole substance of the bread passes into the whole body of Christ; whereas in natural transmutation the matter of the one receives the form of the other, the previous form being laid aside. Secondly, they have this in common, that on both sides something remains the same; whereas this does not happen in creation: yet differently; for the same matter or subject remains in natural transmutation; whereas in this sacrament the same accidents remain.

From these observations we can gather the various ways of speaking in such matters. For, because in no one of the aforesaid three things are the extremes coexistent, therefore in none of them can one extreme be predicated of the other by the substantive verb of the present tense: for we do not say, "Non-being is being" or, "Bread is the body of Christ," or, "Air is fire," or, "White is black." Yet because of the relationship of the extremes in all of them we can use the preposition "ex" [out of], which denotes order; for we can truly and properly say that "being is

made out of non-being,” and “out of bread, the body of Christ,” and “out of air, fire,” and “out of white, black.” But because in creation one of the extremes does not pass into the other, we cannot use the word “conversion” in creation, so as to say that “non-being is converted into being”: we can, however, use the word in this sacrament, just as in natural transmutation. But since in this sacrament the whole substance is converted into the whole substance, on that account this conversion is properly termed transubstantiation.

Again, since there is no subject of this conversion, the things which are true in natural conversion by reason of the subject, are not to be granted in this conversion. And in the first place indeed it is evident that potentiality to the opposite follows a subject, by reason whereof we say that “a white thing can be black,” or that “air can be fire”; although the latter is not so proper as the former: for the subject of whiteness, in which there is potentiality to blackness, is the whole substance of the white thing; since whiteness is not a part thereof; whereas the subject of the form of air is part thereof: hence when it is said, “Air can be fire,” it is verified by synecdoche by reason of the part. But in this conversion, and similarly in creation, because there is no subject, it is not said that one extreme can be the other, as that “non-being can be being,” or that “bread can be the body of Christ”: and for the same reason it cannot be properly said that “being is made of [de] non-being,” or that “the body of Christ is made of bread,” because this preposition “of” [de] denotes a consubstantial cause, which consubstantiality of the extremes in natural transmutations is considered according to something common in the subject. And for the same reason it is not granted that “bread will be the body of Christ,” or that it “may become the body of Christ,” just as it is not granted in creation that “non-being will be being,” or that “non-being may become being,” because this manner of speaking is verified in natural transmutations by reason of the subject: for instance, when we say that “a white thing becomes black,” or “a white thing will be black.”

Nevertheless, since in this sacrament, after the change, something remains the same, namely, the accidents of the bread, as stated above (a. 5), some of these expressions may be admitted by way of similitude, namely, that

“bread is the body of Christ,” or, “bread will be the body of Christ,” or “the body of Christ is made of bread”; provided that by the word “bread” is not understood the substance of bread, but in general “that which is contained under the species of bread,” under which species there is first contained the substance of bread, and afterwards the body of Christ.

Reply to Objection 1. That out of which something else is made, sometimes implies together with the subject, one of the extremes of the transmutation, as when it is said “a black thing is made out of a white one”; but sometimes it implies only the opposite or the extreme, as when it is said—“out of morning comes the day.” And so it is not granted that the latter becomes the former, that is, “that morning becomes the day.” So likewise in the matter in hand, although it may be said properly that “the body of Christ is made out of bread,” yet it is not said properly that “bread becomes the body of Christ,” except by similitude, as was said above.

Reply to Objection 2. That out of which another is made, will sometimes be that other because of the subject which is implied. And therefore, since there is no subject of this change, the comparison does not hold.

Reply to Objection 3. In this change there are many more difficulties than in creation, in which there is but this one difficulty, that something is made out of nothing; yet this belongs to the proper mode of production of the first cause, which presupposes nothing else. But in this conversion not only is it difficult for this whole to be changed into that whole, so that nothing of the former may remain (which does not belong to the common mode of production of a cause), but furthermore it has this difficulty that the accidents remain while the substance is destroyed, and many other difficulties of which we shall treat hereafter (q. 77). Nevertheless the word “conversion” is admitted in this sacrament, but not in creation, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 4. As was observed above, potentiality belongs to the subject, whereas there is no subject in this conversion. And therefore it is not granted that bread can be the body of Christ: for this conversion does not come about by the passive potentiality of the creature, but solely by the active power of the Creator.