

Lāszlō Hortobāgyi (Hortator):
Summa Technologiae
1994-2023

Ecce respondeo dicenti, Quid faciebat Deus antequam faceret coelum et terram; respondeo non illud quod quidam respondisse perhibetur joculariter, eludens quaestionis violentiam: Alta, inquit, scrutantibus gehennas parabat. Aliud est videre, aliud ridere; haec non respondeo. Libentius enim responderim, Nescio, quod nescio; quam illud unde irridetur qui alta interrogavit, et laudatur qui falsa respondit. Sed dico te, Deus noster, omnis creaturae creatorem. Et si coeli et terrae nomine omnis creatura intelligitur; audenter dico, Antequam faceret Deus coelum et terram, non faciebat aliquid: si enim faciebat, quid nisi creaturam faciebat? Et utinam sic sciam, quidquid utiliter scire cupio, quemadmodum scio quod nulla fiebat creatura, antequam fieret ulla creatura.

See, I answer him that asketh, “What did God before He made heaven and earth?” I answer not as one is said to have done merrily (eluding the pressure of the question), “He was preparing hell (saith he) for pryers into mysteries.” It is one thing to answer enquiries, another to make sport of enquirers. So I answer not; for rather had I answer, “I know not,” what I know not, than so as to raise a laugh at him who asketh deep things and gain praise for one who answereth false things.

But I say that Thou, our God, art the Creator of every creature: and if by the name “heaven and earth,” every creature be understood; I boldly say, “that before God made heaven and earth, He did not make any thing.” For if He made, what did He make but a creature? And would I knew whatsoever I desire to know to my profit, as I know, that no creature was made, before there was made any creature.

The Confessions of Saint Augustine
Book XI /Chapter XII between AD 397 and 400.