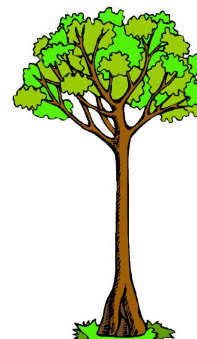


Five, Six or Nine Levels? Covering Memo Plus Several Briefing Notes

I'm going to ask you to be patient with me as I continue with the five-level format for a few pages. Things get a bit more complex from here on.

First, let's go back to the text I organized earlier on [threats to forests](#). For this example, I've chosen Figure 9 from that section as my organization structure. For ease of reference, I've reproduced it on the next page, now numbered as Figure 16.



The format levels for that message would be as follows, in order of increasing detail (that is, moving from [abstract concepts to concrete details](#)):

1. Threats to Forests
2. Summary
3. Region
4. Species
5. Type of Threat
6. Paragraphs of Text

That's six levels. And six levels tells me that I've got a format problem as things stand.

As I look over all the text before me, I try to look ahead to imagine how it will look when it's formatted. There's no law that says I can't add to the five-level format as it stands. I could, say, use text indentations, boldface lower-case headings or different fonts to show how further levels are subordinate to others. However, I try to avoid such intricate format schemes. Briefing notes are plenty complicated enough without making readers struggle to understand the format structure. If they have to struggle to understand it, they may not bother. And that becomes just as much your problem as it is the readers' problem.

As a result, I decide that I've gone as far as I should in using the tools of headings, sub-headings, bold type and underlining. Instead, I decide to split my message into seven documents — one for each region:

- Attachment 1 — New Brunswick
- Attachment 2 — Quebec
- Attachment 3 — Ontario
- Attachment 4 — Northeastern U.S.A.
- Attachment 5 — Alberta
- Attachment 6 — B.C.
- Attachment 7 — Northwestern U.S.A.

Each of these documents uses the five-level format you've seen me develop.

NEW BRUNSWICK	<u>white pine</u>	<u>red spruce</u>	- fire
<u>white spruce</u>	- disease	- insects	- over-harvesting
- insects	- fire	- land conversion	- land conversion
- land conversion	- land conversion	<u>maple</u>	<u>white pine</u>
<u>maple</u>	<u>black spruce</u>	- disease	- weather
- weather	- insects	- fire	- erosion
- erosion	- land conversion	- over-harvesting	- over-harvesting
- fire	<u>balsam fir</u>	- land conversion	- land conversion
- land conversion	- insects	<u>white pine</u>	<u>lodgepole pine</u>
<u>white pine</u>	- fire	- insects	- insects
- insects	N.E. U.S.A.	- weather	<u>black spruce</u>
- fire	<u>white birch</u>	- erosion	- erosion
<u>black spruce</u>	- insects	- disease	- land conversion
- over-harvesting	- weather	- fire	<u>Western red cedar</u>
- land conversion	- erosion	- over-harvesting	- insects
QUEBEC	<u>white spruce</u>	- land conversion	- weather
<u>white birch</u>	- disease	<u>lodgepole pine</u>	- erosion
- insects	- fire	- insects	- disease
- weather	- over-harvesting	- weather	- over-harvesting
- land conversion	- land conversion	- erosion	- land conversion
<u>white spruce</u>	<u>red spruce</u>	- disease	<u>balsam fir</u>
- disease	- over-harvesting	- fire	- erosion
- fire	- land conversion	- over-harvesting	- disease
- land conversion	<u>maple</u>	- land conversion	N.W. U.S.A.
<u>red spruce</u>	- insects	<u>black spruce</u>	<u>white birch</u>
- insects	- weather	- insects	- insects
<u>maple</u>	- erosion	- disease	- weather
- land conversion	<u>white pine</u>	- fire	<u>white spruce</u>
<u>white pine</u>	- insects	<u>Western red cedar</u>	- insects
- erosion	- weather	- insects	- weather
- over-harvesting	- disease	- land conversion	- erosion
<u>black spruce</u>	- fire	<u>balsam fir</u>	<u>red spruce</u>
- insects	<u>black spruce</u>	- weather	- fire
- weather	- insects	- erosion	- over-harvesting
- erosion	- weather	- land conversion	<u>maple</u>
<u>balsam fir</u>	- erosion	B.C.	- erosion
- weather	- disease	<u>white spruce</u>	- fire
- erosion	- fire	- erosion	- over-harvesting
ONTARIO	- over-harvesting	- disease	- land conversion
<u>white birch</u>	<u>balsam fir</u>	- fire	- land conversion
- land conversion	- erosion	- land conversion	<u>black spruce</u>
- erosion	- disease	<u>red spruce</u>	- fire
<u>white spruce</u>	- fire	- insects	- land conversion
- insects	- over-harvesting	- weather	<u>Western red cedar</u>
- land conversion	<u>balsam fir</u>	- erosion	- weather
<u>red spruce</u>	- erosion	- disease	<u>balsam fir</u>
- disease	- fire	- fire	- insects
- fire	- over-harvesting	- land conversion	- weather
<u>maple</u>	<u>white spruce</u>	<u>maple</u>	- erosion
- weather	- weather	- disease	ALBERTA
- erosion	- erosion	<u>white birch</u>	<u>white birch</u>
- disease	- land conversion	- insects	- insects
ALBERTA	<u>white birch</u>	- weather	- weather
<u>white birch</u>	- insects	- erosion	- erosion
- insects	- weather	<u>white spruce</u>	- weather
- weather	- erosion	- weather	- erosion
- erosion	- land conversion	- disease	- land conversion
- disease			

Figure 16

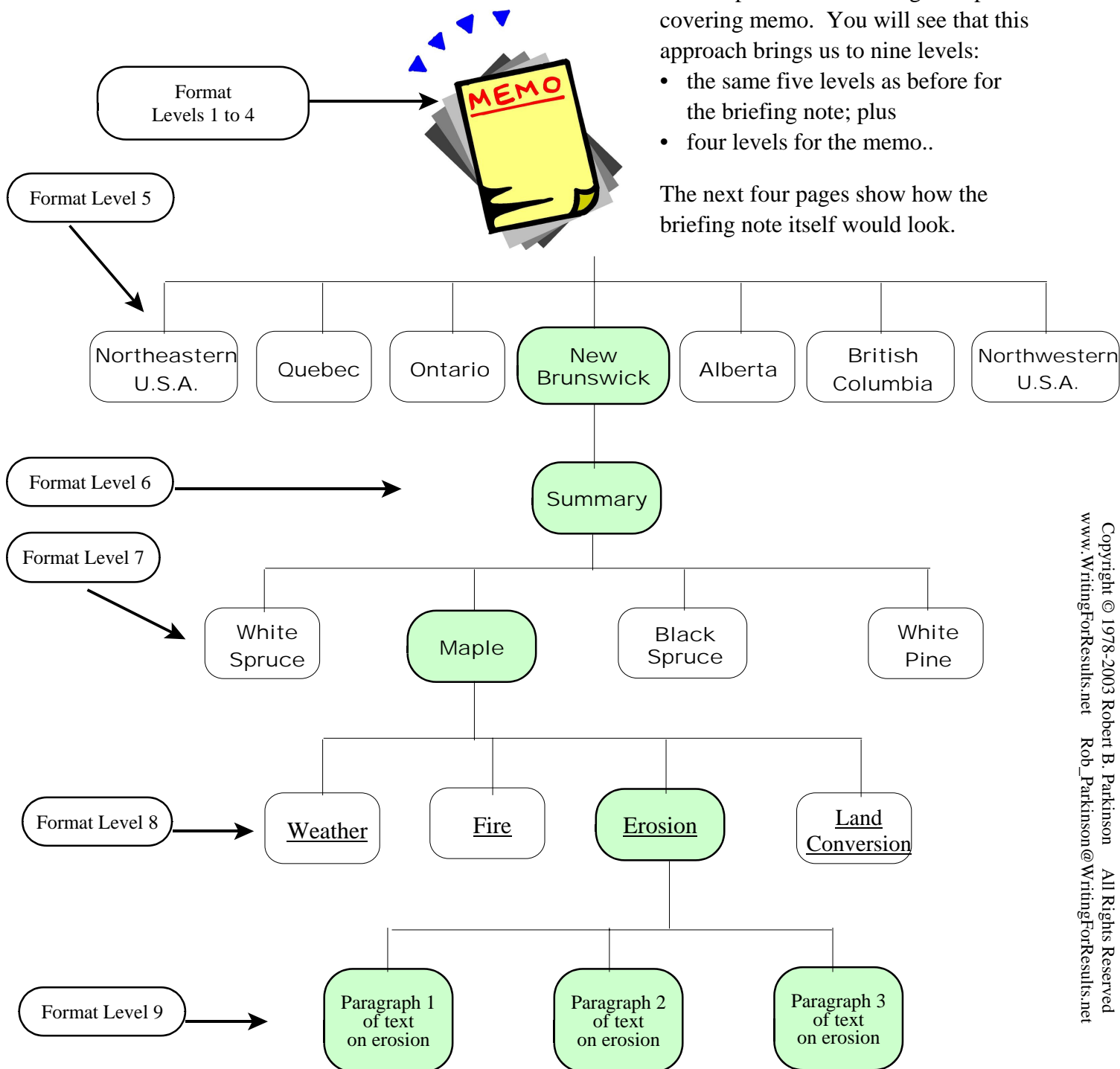
By splitting things into seven briefing notes, I can keep the visual appearance simple enough that I can still lead the reader through it with ease. However, I do need to add a covering memo to tie the seven notes together, serving as a super-summary of what the notes have to say. (In some organizations, you might be required to provide the memo even with just one briefing note.)

I will show what this looks like with one of the briefing notes, the one that deals with threats to forests in New Brunswick. Figure 17 on this page shows an organization chart for that part of that briefing note plus a covering memo.

You will see that this approach brings us to nine levels:

- the same five levels as before for the briefing note; plus
- four levels for the memo..

The next four pages show how the briefing note itself would look.



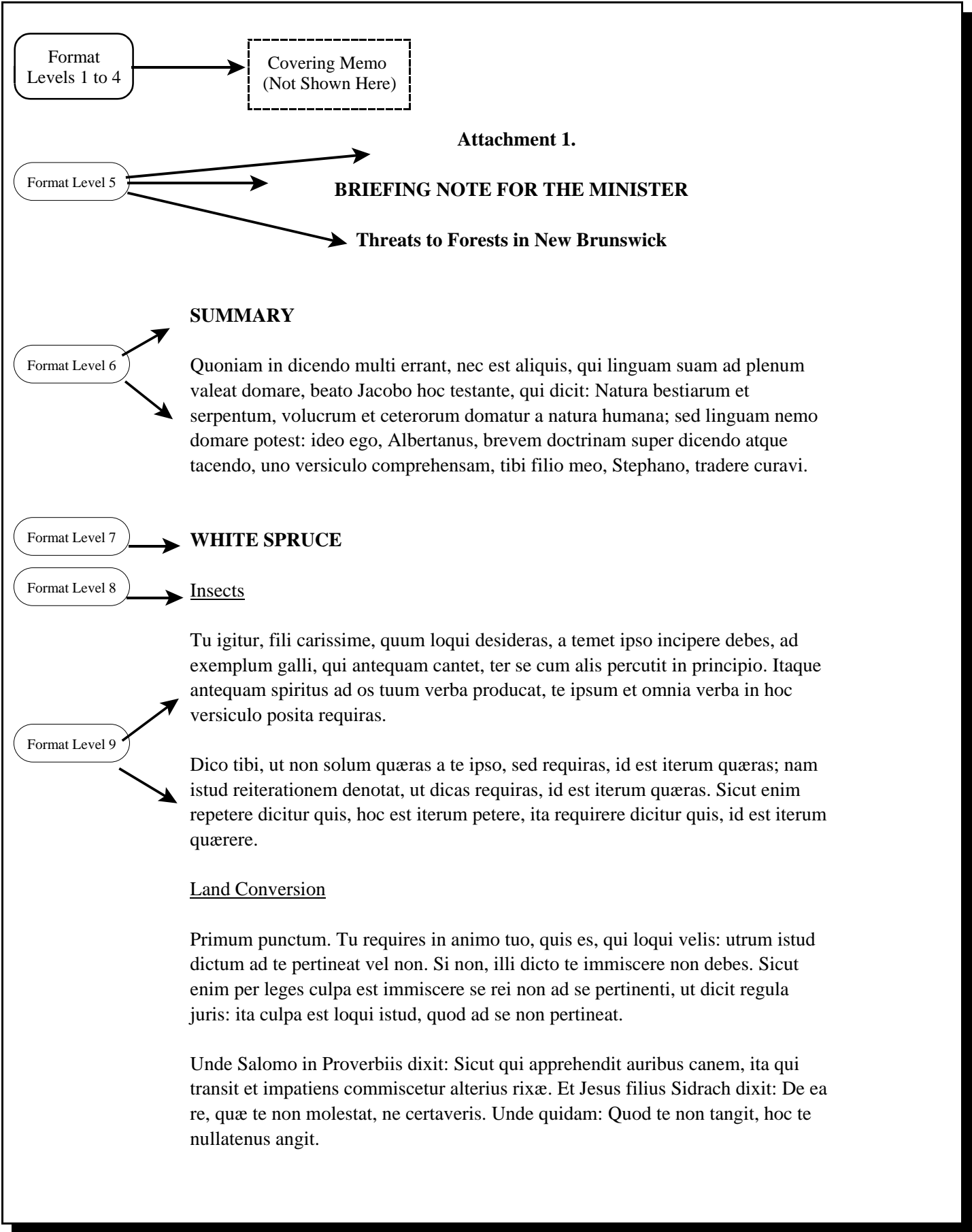


Figure 18.A

MAPLE

Weather

Quæ res tibi summopere notanda est, quoniam si de rebus ad te non pertinentibus minime curaveris, magnam cordis et animi tranquillitatem tibi comparabis; quod egregie dicit metrīsta quidam: Pacificat multum de paucis sumere cultum.

Secundum punctum. Requiras te ipsum a te ipso, an aliqua perturbatione animi captus sis, scilicet ira, odio vel invidia, aut sis ab animi passionibus alienus. Nam si turbatus animus tuus fuerit, a loquendo abstinere debebis, et motus animi turbatos cohibebis.

Ait enim Tullius: Virtus est cohibere motus animi turbatos, ac appetitus obediētes efficere rationi: et ideo tacere debet iratus, quia, ut ait Seneca: Iratus nihil nisi criminis loquitur loco.

Erosion

Quare dixit Cato: Iratus de re incerta contendere noli. Impedit ira animum, ne possit cernere verum. Et alius dixit: Lex videt iratum, iratus non videt illam. Et Ovidius: Vince animos iramque tuam, qui cetera vincis.

Inde et Tullius dixit: Ira procul absit, cum qua nil recte fieri, nil considerate potest. Quæ in aliqua perturbatione fiunt, ea nec constanter fieri possunt, nec ab his, qui adsunt, approbari. Vides ergo quanta mala faciunt in homine passionēs istæ, ira, odium, invidia, amore, tristitia, libido. Ait enim Salustius: Omnes homines, qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio, amicitia, ira atque misericordia vacuos esse decet; quoniam non facile animus verum providet, ubi hæc officiunt.

Quare animus his passionibus turbatus non verum videt, quia sunt morbi animi ipsum excæcantes; quod egregie testatur Petrus Alfonsius dicens: Natura hoc habet humana, ut, animo quoquo pacto conturbato, in vero falsoque discernendo discretionis careat oculo. Et si de ira, irato atque iracundo scire volueris, lege in libro, quem composui, De Amore Et Dilectione Dei Et Aliarum Rerum, Et De Forma Vitæ, in titulo De Amicitia Iracundi Hominis Vitanda.

Fire

Etiam certe cavere debes, ne voluntas dicendi intantum te moveat atque ad dicendum inducat, quod appetitus tuus rationi non consentiat. Ait enim Salomo: Sicut urbs patens et sine murorum ambitu, ita vir, qui non potest cohibere spiritum

- 3 -

suum in loquendo. Inde etiam dici consuevit: Tacere qui nescit, loqui nescit. Nam et quidam sapiens interrogatus, cur tantum taceret, an quia stultus esset, respondit: Stultus tacere non potest.

Alibi Salomo dixit: Aurum tuum et argentum tuum confla, et verbis tuis facito stateram, et impone ori tuo frenos rectos, et attende ne forte labaris in lingua et sit casus tuus insanabilis in morte. Et iterum idem ait: Qui custodit os suum, custodit animam suam: qui autem inconsideratus est ad loquendum, sentiet mala.

Et etiam Catho dixit: Virtutem primam puta compescere linguam. Proximus ille Deo, qui scit ratione tacere.

Land Conversion

Tertium punctum. Requiras te ipsum et a te ipso in animo tuo recogites, quis es qui alium reprehendere vis vel aliis dicere vel utrum de simili dicto vel facto valeas reprehendi. Nam dixit beatus Paulus in Epistola ad Romanos: inexcusabilis es, o homo, qui iudicas; nam te ipsum condemnes, si eadem agas, quæ iudicas.

Et in eadem epistola subdit: Qui ergo alium doces, te ipsum non doces: qui prædicas non furandum, furaris: qui dicis non mœchandum, mœcharis: qui abominaris idola, sacrilegium facis: Deum inhonoras. Et Catho dixit: Quæ culpæ soles, ea tu ne feceris ipse. Turpe est doctori, quum culpa redarguit ipsum.

WHITE PINE

Insects

Nam bene dicere et mala operari, nihil aliud est, quam se propria voce damnare, ut Augustinus ait. Et alibi idem Catho ait. Alterius dictum aut factum ne carperis unquam, exemplo simili ne te derideat alter.

- First Point. Qui bene docet et male vivit, qualiter damnari debet, diu instituit. Priusquam igitur alium culpes, a vitiis similibus innocens esse cures; quod idem Gregorius confirmavit dicens:
- Second Point. De peccatis, a peccatis debet esse alienus, exemplo Christi, qui mulierem in adulterio deprehensam absolvit, et liberavit a pessimis Judæis, qui accusabant et iudicabant peccatricem, quum ipsimet scelerosissimi forent. Terreantur hic iudices fornicarii, adulteri, avari, iniusti, tam spirituales quam seculares, de quibus ait Salomo: Iudicium durissimum fiet his qui præsumunt; et sequitur: quoniam potentes potenter tormenta patientur.

Figure 18.C

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- Third Point. Nam quidam sapiens interrogatus, quomodo optime posset dicere, respondit: Si tantummodo dixeris quod bene scieris. Et Jesus Sidrach: Si est tibi intellectus, responde proximo tuo: sin autem, sit manus tua super os tuum, ne capiaris in verbo indisciplinato, et confundaris.
- Fourth Point. Requiras, quis erit effectus tuæ locutionis; nam quædam ab initio videntur bona, quæ malum effectum habent. Quæritur non solum principium; sed etiam finem et effectum requirere debes. Unde Pamphilus dixit: Principium finemque simul prudentia spectat.

Rerum finis habet crimen et omne decus. Verbi principium, finem quoque conspice verbi, ut possis melius præmeditata loqui.

Fire

Nam dixit Petrus Alfonsius, qui fuit optimus philosophus: «Si dicere metuas, unde pœniteas, semper est melius non, quam sic.» Sapienti enim magis expedit tacere pro se, quam loqui contra se, quia paucos vel neminem tacendo, multos loquendo circumventos vidimus, quod pulchre voluit qui ait: Nil tacuisse nocet, nocet esse sæpe locutum.

BLACK SPRUCE

Over-Harvesting

Verba enim sagittis sunt quasi similia: facile dimittuntur, difficile retrahuntur; quare dici consuevit: Evolat, emissum semel, irrevocabile verbum.

Ad intelligentiam et expositionem hujus dictionis Quis multa notari possent; sed ista quinque puncta, superius posita, brevitatis causa tibi sufficiant. Sequitur de quid loqueris.

Land Conversion

Primum punctum. Requiere debes inprimis, utrum verum vel falsum. Ait enim Jesus Sidrach: Ante omnia opera tua verbum verum præcedat te, et ante omnem actum consilium stabile.

Contact: Jane Doe, 990-0000
Industry, Economics and Programs Branch, CFS