

rather complicated statements and cannot be put into just a few words.

The Synod of Dort agreed upon a statement in five parts, a long statement. This statements they divided into five heads of doctrine more or less following the arrangement of the five points of Arminianism. They called these The First Head of Doctrine--Of Divine Predestination. The Second Head of Doctrine--Of the Death of Christ and the Redemption of Man thereby. The Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine--Of the Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God and the Manner thereof. The Fifth Head of Doctrine--Of the Perseverance of the Saints. Then they have a long statement about each of these.

The fact that they were answering Five Points of Arminianism led people during the next century or two sometimes to speak of the Five Points of Calvinism. The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language on Historical Principles in the brief word about Calvinism in it has a statement: "The Five Points of Calvinism are: (1) Particular Election (2) Particular Redemption (3) Moral Inability in a Fallen State (4) Irresistible Grace (5) Final Preservation. I've never seen that list anywhere else arranged that way.

Somebody, maybe a century ago, maybe a century and a half, I don't know, but at least a century or two after the Council of Dort, some English speaking person tried to represent these ideas in an acrostic, so it would be easy to remember. So he re-arranged the order of them, and then he worked out terms for them which are about as misleading as any terms that could have been gotten. I guess he thought the word tulip would remind people of Holland. The Synod of Dort was in Holland so he took the word tulip and it makes it very easy to remember the terms which he gave, terms which are extremely misleading and have led to many many people having an utterly false idea of what Calvinism is.

Basing on the word tulip he said total depravity for the first. Well now the third in the list given in the Oxford Dictionary is "moral inability in a fallen state." I'm sure that anyone who studies the Bible at all will readily recognize that the Bible teaches there is nothing good in man. There is nothing in man that deserves God's favor, that we cannot possibly save ourselves. So "moral inability in a fallen state" is a good statement. But "total depravity" moves away from this question what there is in man that makes it necessary God should save him, that shows he deserves to be saved. It moves away from that altogether and speaks about man's character, and nature and there is plenty of depravity in the human race. But if there was total depravity everything would fall to pieces of its own weight in a very very brief time as you can well imagine. Calvinism--Calvinists do not believe man is totally depraved, not that the very worst of men is totally depraved!! The image of God was lost in the fall but not completely lost. Many people who make no claim to be Christians, who even oppose Christians, have very lovely characters and have much of good in their attitudes, But this does not deserve their salvation.