

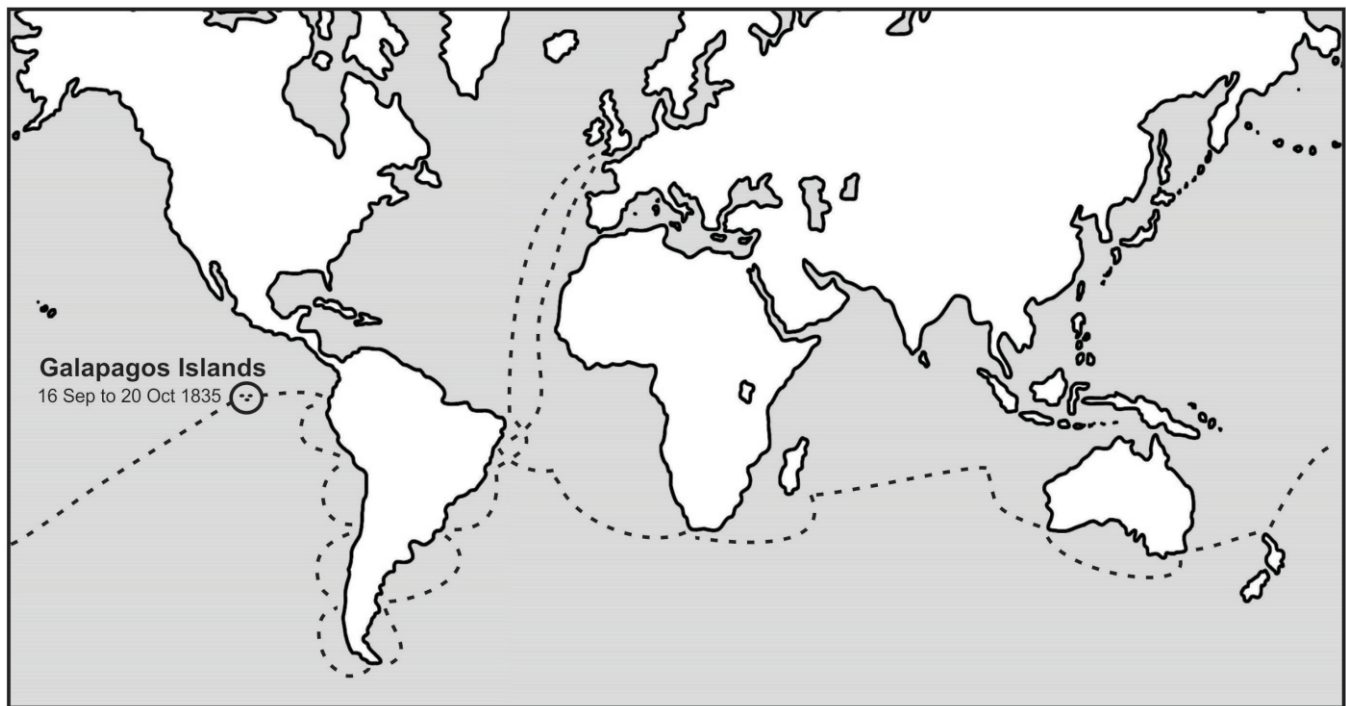
MESSAGE-INCIDENT PRINCIPLE

NEW APPLICATION



DARWIN'S HMS BEAGLE VOYAGE

27 December 1831 to 2 October 1836



Redrawn from P Bowler, *Charles Darwin*
(Cambridge: U Press, 1990), 54

Private

DAR. 270.1:25

Down Beckenham

Kent

May 7th 1879

Dear Sir

It seems to me absurd to doubt that a man may be an ardent Theist & an evolutionist. — You are right about Kingsley. Asa Gray, the eminent botanist, is another case in point — What my own views may be is a question of no consequence to any one except myself.

But as you ask, I may state that my judgment often fluctuates. Moreover whether a man deserves to be called a theist depends on the definition of the term, which is much too large a subject for a note. In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the

existence of a God. — I think that generally (& more and more so as I grow older) but not always, that an agnostic would be the most correct description of my state of mind.

Dear Sir

Yours faithfully

Ch. Darwin

Down Beckenham | Kent May 7th 1879

Dear Sir

It seems to me absurd to doubt that a man may be an ardent Theist & an evolutionist. — You are right about Kingsley. Asa Gray, the eminent botanist, is another case in point — What my own views may be is a question of no consequence to any one except myself. — But as you ask, I may state that my judgment often fluctuates. Moreover whether a man deserves to be called a theist depends on the definition of the term: which is much too large a subject for a note. In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. — I think that generally (& more and more so as I grow older) but not always, that an agnostic would be the most correct description of my state of mind.

Dear Sir | Yours faithfully | Ch. Darwin

Copied with permission of Cambridge University Library