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**Archives** BL, papers and list of sermons, Add. MSS 11819, 11826 · Bodl. Oxf., incomplete copy of his history of Rochester with MS additions and corrections | BL, letters to Sir Henry Ellis, Add. MS 38626 · BL, letters to Thomas Fisher, Egerton MS 926 · Bodl. Oxf., corresp. with John Charles Brooke · Bodl. Oxf., corresp. with Richard Gough

**Wealth at death** estate at Northwood: will, PRO, PROB 11/1332, sig. 769

**Dennett, John (1790–1852)**, inventor of a life-saving rocket, and antiquary, lived in Newport, Isle of Wight. In or about 1830 he invented a life-saving rocket apparatus (known as ‘Dennett’s’) for conveying a rope from the shore to a shipwrecked crew. George William Manby had previously used a grappling shot fired from a mortar for the same purpose. Dennett’s apparatus resembled a sky-rocket, but had an iron casing rather than a paper one, and a pole 8 feet long. It weighed 23 lb, was propelled by a 9 lb charge, and had a range of 250 yards. Dennett subsequently increased the range to 400 yards by placing two rockets side by side on the same pole, but the action of these parallel rockets proved to be unsatisfactory.

A ship’s crew off Bembridge, in the Isle of Wight, having been saved by means of Dennett’s rocket, the board of customs in 1834 had the apparatus supplied to several coast-guard stations. Its official use was superseded by the adoption of Boxer’s rocket in 1865. Dennett’s rockets are said to have been sent to all parts of the world, and to have won for their inventor several overseas honours. A short time before his death, Dennett was appointed custodian of Carisbrooke Castle. It would appear that this was a form of recognition for his services as an inventor. He had a practical knowledge of antiquities, and was a corresponding member of the British Archaeological Association. He contributed to its journal short accounts of various antiquities found in England, and read a paper on the barrows of the Isle of Wight at the Winchester congress of the association in 1845. He died on 10 July 1852.

W. W. WROTH, rev. R. C. COX

**Sources** *GM*, 2nd ser., 38 (1852), 319–20 · ‘Rocket and mortar apparatus for saving life from shipwreck and volunteer life brigades’, *Cornhill Magazine*, 28 (1873), 72–87

**Denney, James (1856–1917)**, United Free Church of Scotland minister and theologian, was born on 5 February 1856 in Paisley, the eldest son of John Denney and his wife, Mary Barr. His parents belonged to the Reformed Presbyterian church (the Cameronians), in which his father, a joiner, was a deacon. When he was four months old his parents moved to Greenock. He attended the Highlanders Academy in the town before studying at the University of Glasgow (1874–9), graduating with a double first in classics and philosophy. Denney then studied theology at the Free Church college in Glasgow, the Reformed Presbyterians having joined with the Free Church of Scotland while he was at university. He graduated in 1883 and then spent three years in the East Hill Street Mission of Free St John’s Church, Glasgow. In 1886, at the age of thirty, he was

ordained and inducted to the charge of East Free Church in Broughty Ferry. A few months later, on 1 July 1886, he married Mary Carmichael Brown of Glasgow: they had no children and she predeceased him in 1907. During his time as a parish minister he published several books, including *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (1892) and *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (1894).

Denney remained in Broughty Ferry until 1897, when he was appointed to the chair of systematic and pastoral theology at the Free Church college in Glasgow. His theological acumen had by this date already been widely recognized, as evidenced by the invitation to give a series of lectures at the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1894, later published as *Studies in Theology* (1895). As a teacher Denney was a hard taskmaster, always demanding the very highest quality of work from his students. His manner could be curt and even abrasive, and sometimes, to those who did not know him, he appeared remote, even cold. This, however, was countered by another side to his character, as witnessed by the admiration and loyalty he inspired in successive generations of students, and the warmth and humour he displayed among close friends such as J. P. Struthers, W. R. Thomson, and W. Robertson Nicoll. On the death of A. B. Bruce in 1899, Denney succeeded to the chair of New Testament language, literature, and theology. He held this chair until his untimely death in 1917, also serving as principal of the college from 1915. He was awarded honorary doctorates in divinity by Chicago Theological Seminary, Glasgow University, and Aberdeen University.

Theologically Denney was, on the whole, conservative. This was apparent in his critique of the prevailing liberal theology of his day: he objected to Harnack’s treatment of miracle and the supernatural, and he highlighted the consequences of Ritschl’s denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, on some issues, Denney was decidedly on the liberal wing of his church, revealing an original and creative theological mind and anticipating Karl Barth and the neo-orthodox movement. His position on the doctrine of scripture caused considerable anguish among the evangelicals (with whom, on so many theological issues, he was at one). In one of the lectures given in Chicago, revised heavily before publication, he denied verbal inspiration. Denney continued to promote his views on this subject and, indeed, on several occasions, at both presbytery and general assembly, he publicly denied the infallibility of scripture and the doctrine of verbal inerrancy. Liberal tendencies were also noticeable in his desire for the abandonment of credal subscription: he argued for the replacement of subscription to the Westminster confession of faith with the simple formula, ‘I believe in God through Jesus Christ, His only Son our Saviour’.

As a theologian, Denney’s great theme was the cross of Christ. He was passionately committed to the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, and increasingly viewed the cross as the heart and centre of all theology. It has been argued that this position, developed much more fully in