cepted, they were married by biſhop Talbot in 1725. At the earneſt requeſt of both, Mrs Talbot and her daughter conſented to live with them, and the two fa­milies from that time became one.

About this time biſhop Talbot alſo gave preferments to Mr Butler and Mr Benſon, whoſe riſe and progreſs in the church is here interwoven with the hiſtory of Mr Secker. In the winter of 1725-6, Mr Butler firſt publiſhed his incomparable ſermons; on which, as Dr Beilby Porteous and Dr Stinton inform us, Mr Secker took pains to render the ſtyle more familiar, and the author’s meaning more obvious: yet they were at laſt by many called obſcure. Mr Secker gave his friend the ſame aſſiſtance in that noble work the Analogy of Religion, &c.

He now gave up all the time he poſſibly could to his reſidence at Houghton, applying himſelf with alacrity to all the duties of a country clergyman, and ſupporting that uſeful and reſpectable character throughout with the ſtricteſt propriety. He omitted nothing which he thought would be of uſe to the ſouls and bodies of the people entruſted to his care. He brought down his converſation and his fermons to the level of their underſtandings; he viſited them in private, he catechiſed the young and ignorant, he received his country neighbours and tenants very kindly and hoſpitably, and was of great ſervice to the poorer ſort of them by his ſkill in phyſic, which was the only uſe he ever made of it. Though this place was in a very remote part of the world, yet the ſolitude of it perfectly ſuited his ſtudious diſpoſition, and the income ariſing from it bounded his ambition. Here he would have been content to live and die; here, as he has often been heard to declare, he ſpent ſome of the happieſt hours of his life; and it was no thought or choice of his own that removed him to an higher and more public ſphere; but Mrs Secker’s health, which now began to be very bad, and was thought to be injured by the dampneſs of the ſituation, obliged him to think of exchanging it for a more healthy one. Accordingly, an exchange was made through the friendly interpoſition of Mr Benſon (who generouſly ſacrificed his own intereſt on this occaſion, by relinquiſhing a prebend of his own to ſerve his friend) with Dr Finney, prebendary of Durham, and rector of Ryton; and Mr Secker was inſtſtuted to Ryton and the prebend June 3. 1727. For the two following years he lived chiefly at Durham, going every week to offi­ciate at Ryton, and ſpending there two or three months together in the ſummer.

In July 1732 he was appointed chaplain to the king; for which favour he was indebted to Dr Sherlock, who having heard him preach at Bath, had conceived the higheſt opinion of his abilities, and thought them well worthy of being brought forward into public notice. From that time an intimacy commenced between them, and he received from that great prelate many ſolid proofs of eſteem and friendſhip,

His month of waiting at St James’s happened to be Auguſt, and on Sunday the 27th of that month he preached before the queen, the king being then abroad. A few days after, her majeſty ſent for him into her cloſet, and held a long and gracious converſation with him; in the courſe of which he took an opportunity of men­tioning to her his friend Mr Butler. He alſo, not long after this, on Mr Talbot’s being made lord chancellor,

found means to have Mr Butler effectually recommend­ed to him for his chaplain. The queen alſo appointed him clerk of her cloſet; from whence he roſe, as his ta­lents became more known, to thoſe high dignities which he afterwards attained.

Mr Secker now began to have a public character, and ſtood high in the eſtimation of thoſe who were al­lowed to be the beſt judges of merit: he had already given proofs of abilities that plainly indicated the emi­nence to which he muſt one day riſe, as a preacher and a divine; and it was not long before an opportunity of­fered of placing him in an advantageous point of view. Dr Tyrrwhit, who ſucceeded Dr Clarke as rector of St James’s in 1729, ſound that preaching in ſo large a church endangered his health. Biſhop Gibſon, there­fore, his father-in-law, propoſed to the crown that he ſhould be made reſidentiary of St Paul’s, and that Mr Secker ſhould ſucceed him in the rectory. This ar­rangement was ſo acceptable to thoſe in power, that it took place without any difficulty. Mr Secker was inſtituted rector the 18th of May 1733; and in the be­ginning of July went to Oxford to take his degree of Doctor of Laws, not being of ſufficient ſtanding for that of divinity. On this occaſion it was that he preached his celebrated Act Sermon, on the advantages and duties of academical education, which was univerſally allowed to be a maſterpiece of ſound reaſoning and juſt compoſition: it was printed at the deſire of the heads of houſes, and quickly paſſed through ſeveral edi­tions. It is now to be found in the ſecond collection of Occaſional Sermons, publiſhed by himſelf in 1766.

It was thought that the reputation he acquired by this ſermon, contributed not a little toward that pro­motion which very ſoon followed its publication. For in December 1734, he received a very unexpected no­tice from biſhop Gibſon, that the king had fixed on him to be biſhop of Briſtol. Dr Benſon was about the ſame time appointed to the ſee of Glouceſter, as was Dr Fleming to that of Carliſle; and the three new biſhops were all conſecrated together in Lambeth Chapel, Jan. 19. 1734-5, the conſecration-ſermon being preach­ed by Dr Thomas, afterwards biſhop of Wincheſter.

The honours to which Dr Secker was thus raiſed in the prime of life did not in the leaſt abate his diligence and attention to buſineſs; for which, indeed, there was now more occaſion than ever. His learned biographers, Meſſrs Porteous and Stinton, now relate the manner in which he ſet about the viſitation of his dioceſe, and the ceremony of confirmation, which he performed in a great number of places; he alſo preached in ſeveral churches, ſometimes twice a-day. The affairs of his pariſh of St James’s being likewiſe in great diſorder, he took extraordinary pains to regulate and adjuſt every thing, particularly the management of the poor; and thus became of ſignal ſervice to his pariſhioners, even in a temporal view. But, ſay our authors, “it was their ſpiritual welfare which engaged, as it ought to do, his chief attention. As far as the circumſtances of the times, and the populouſneſs of that part of the metro­polis allowed, he omitted not even thoſe private admo­nitions and perſonal applications which are often attend­ed with the happieſt effects. He allowed out of his own income a ſalary for reading early and late prayers, which had formerly been paid out of the offertory mo­ney. He held a confirmation once every year, and ex-