

THE CANADIAN

CHRISTIAN EXAMINER,

AND

PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

No. 12.

DECEMBER, 1839.

VOL. 3.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF BABYLON.

B. C. 2204. The first king who reigned in Babylon, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures, was Nimrod, the grandson of Ham; and of him it is said, that "he was a mighty hunter before the Lord." From these words we may infer, he employed his followers in the hunting of wild beasts, to prepare them for feats of courage in the field, as well as to conciliate the favour of the inhabitants to his government, by freeing them of such dangerous intruders. Nimrod, though ambitious, appears to have been so far a lover of peace, that he used his power in building cities in the countries which he subdued. And still desirous of extensive dominions, he passed into Assyria (as the passage in Genesis may be rendered) and built Nineveh, after the name of his son Ninus. This king Nimrod is understood to be the same with Belus, a name signifying a Lord, the founder of the Assyrian empire, and who was afterwards adored as a god.

Ninus succeeded to his father, and possessed the same desire of extending his dominions; he accordingly engaged the assistance of the Arabians, and conquered a vast extent of country, from Egypt on the west, to India and Bactriana on the east. Returning from these conquests, he resolved to make Nineveh the largest city in the world; he proceeded therefore with the work, and extended the city until it was upwards of eighteen miles in length and eleven in breadth.— He fortified it also with walls one hundred feet in

height, and of such breadth that three chariots might go abreast upon them.

After this, Ninus resolved to prosecute his conquests in the east. He accordingly marched with a numerous army, and laid siege to Bactria, the capital of the country. He would now most probably have been forced to raised the siege, but for the assistance of a lady named Semiramis, the wife of one of his officers, by whose directions he became possessed of the citadel, and afterwards of the city. Ninus conceiving a violent passion for this woman, her husband slew himself, when the king took her as his wife. On his return to Nineveh, he had one son by Semiramis, whom he named Ninyas, and died leaving her in possession of the government.

When Semiramis came to the throne, she resolved on making her name distinguished by the greatness of her achievements; she accordingly undertook the building of the great city Babylon; and for this end, it is said, she employed two millions of men, collected out of the provinces of her great empire. And here, that we may bring the extent and greatness of this city into one compendious view, we shall notice some of those works which rendered Babylon so famous in after ages, and in the rearing of which Semiramis, as well as other potentates, had their share.

The city of Babylon was built in an extensive and fertile plain. Its walls were eighty-seven feet in thickness, three hundred and fifty feet in