The difficulty of translating this verse is well known and is clearly brought out in the generally accepted translation, namely

‘The LORD is God, and he hath given us light;
‘bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar’ (R.V.).

The perfect ‘he hath given us light’ is against the context, which seems to require a wish in accordance with the verbs in the surrounding verses, and the imperative ‘bind’ has no obvious subject.

Professor Yadin, however, in 1966 published¹ a fragment of a Scroll which goes far towards solving the problem. In place of הֶלְכַּד אֲדֹרָם ‘bind ye a pilgrimage’ (not ‘sacrifice’, as in the R.V.) this has אֲדוֹרָם אֲנָשִׁים ‘bound ones of a pilgrimage’, which refers not, as Professor Yadin suggests, to the sacrificial beasts but to the ‘ordered band of pilgrims’ standing beside the altar; for the analogy of Roman practice suggests that the festal crowd may have been kept in order by ropes. Some such practice can be illustrated by the poet’s in the Forum the procession halted and the maidens, passing a rope ‘from hand to hand, advanced accompanying the sound of the ‘voice by beating time with the feet.’³

The purpose of the rope in both cases will have been to keep the lines of dancers straight by passing it through their hands, so that they do not become entangled with one another in their excitement; and in the same way the Hebrew pilgrims may have been kept from crowding too close upon the altar by ropes tied round those at the head or on the outskirts of the procession.

Then אֲנָשִׁים ‘and he has given light’ may read as אֲנָשִׁים ‘may be given light’ with two Hebrew MSS. (de Rossi) and the conjunction may be omitted with one MS. (de Rossi) and several ancient VSS. (Pesh., Targ. and Arab. Q,R,B,P),

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¹ In Textus V [1966] 6-7.
² Terence Adelphos IV vii 37.
³ Livy ab urbe condita XXVII xxxvii 14.
while דְּ צָר ‘till, up to ‘may be taken in the local sense of ‘at, beside’ as often elsewhere. 4

The verse may now be translated:
‘may the Lord God shine upon us’
‘the ordered line of pilgrims 5 by the horns of the altar’
‘pilgrims lined up beside (or: at) the horns of the altar’,
which yields a sense suitable to the context and agreeable to a known practice of the ancient world. 6


5 Cp. 1 Ki. 14:6; Is. 33:1; Ps. 69:4 (where emendation is needless) for participles qualifying pron. suffixes.

6 Cp. 1 Ki. 20:14; 2 Chron, 13:3 and 1QM 5:3 for a somewhat similar use of the same verb (see Yadin in, *Scroll of the War* (tr. Rabin 165–8)).