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February 9, 2013: Nihilism at Sports Illustrated

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Title: Nihilism at Sports Illustrated

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2/9/2013—No, I don't mean the swim suit issue. I mean "Does God Care Who Wins the Super Bowl?" Here's how SI describes the article I am referring to: "In a special piece for SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, Mark Oppenheimer (@markopp1), religion columnist for The New York Times, tackles the paradox of big-time football: The sport with the biggest Christian presence, most famous Christian athletes and most religious leaders affiliated with teams features a culture that seemingly goes against the values of Christianity." The story is monumentally hypocritical. There is no real showing of any inconsistency with Christianity. Athletes associated with organized Christianity are shown to be caring and sensitive. All the story suggests by way of inconsistency is that there are anecdotes about individuals who call themselves Christians while being willing to maim their opponents. But this is not true of the groups that support Christianity or the most well-known Christian athletes. Of course the sport is violent and the players rich. In that sense, there is a general inconsistency. But it is not obvious to most people that Christians must be pacifists and poor. No more inconsistency here than in the military or business. In addition, there are in the story the usual sly, secular criticisms, such as public school demonstrations of religious enthusiasm. But aside from all that, the article illustrates the deep nihilism of our culture. Obviously, the answer the article assumes is no, god does not care who wins the Super Bowl. And, indeed, all the Christians interviewed answered just that way. Athletes don't pray to win games. They pray for health or for a good game and so forth. But why should it be assumed that God Does Not Care Who Wins? The God of the Bible cares about everything. He knows every hair on my head. God wanted to look good vis a vis the gods of Egypt when he freed the Hebrews. Why would not the team with the most Christians win the game? (Some people thought that Tebow was being favored by God in this way.) If winning is irrelevant to God, why is not someone getting hurt equally irrelevant? The story and the expected result is all part of our atheism. God is not really real to us. That is why we can say of something important to us that God does not care. If there is a God, He might care. And anyway, if there is a God, we cannot know what He wants.