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Learning About Sex

IVE pamphlets on sex instruc- marriage is failing to give the hapthrough parent - teacher associaif they are well received they will introductions to the subject, they have been planned and written with great care. They are brief and tors and hospitals. clear, are admirably balanced, and valuable. But whose are the right hands?

The question is an awkward one which must have been much in the minds of panel members. It can be answered provisionally by saving that intelligent parents who have already established a relaxed and sensible relationship with their children will find the pamphlets useful supports in their more intimate discussions. The uncertain or embarrassed parent may want to use some of the pamphlets as substitutes for personal from them, and may receive much good. But the pamphlets are intended for guidance, and the principal task should still be left to parents. We cannot help wondering if the project has been taken far enough. Should there not also be a series of pamphlets for adults?

Admittedly, some of these pamphlets are addressed to mothers and fathers; but the assumption behind them is that parents will "The person with a healthy mind," sirable, and that where it is not, too, are in need of guidance.

tion, prepared by an Auckland piness it should." There are many panel, have been published by marriages, not necessarily unsucthe Department of Health. They cessful in public estimation, in are being distributed mainly which sex remains imperfectly understood, or weakened by physitions, and it may be assumed that cal and psychological difficulties. The "person with a healthy mind" be made more widely available. As is not, unfortunately, as common as he should be: if he were, there would be much less work for doc-

"Sex is not the most important in the right hands should be most thing in life," says the same pamphlet, "but it affects the happiness of many people." It is not necessary to be a Freudian, or an academic psychologist of any sort, to suspect that this is an understatement. Sex exists at the very centre of life, and its influence touches every phase of behaviour. Marriage difficulties cannot always be traced to sexual maladjustment, but very often they could be avoided if husbands and wives had more knowledge and understanding of the relationship between sex and love. And this action. Children will take no harm affects the problem of instruction.

Near the end of the pamphlet. Sex and the Parent, is a wise statement: "Attitudes to sex and to other important things are often 'caught' from the parents rather than consciously taught by them." In the right atmosphere of home, where sex is shared by husband and wife as the culmination of an intimacy which far transcends physical pleasure, there can be few problems of instruction. But in other homes the atmosphere is be approaching the subject from different; and too often it is differa full and satisfactory experience. ent through false attitudes to sex, The education of the young is a says one of the pamphlets, "thinks necessary task, and in these pamof sex as a perfectly natural, phlets a first and useful step has normal and desirable part of life, been taken. But many parents ... He knows that in marriage sex grew up when the subject was should be mutually desired and de- concealed or repressed. And they,