

Funeral Services for John Francis Astle  
November 9, 1951 - Providence, Utah

Bishop Eugene Yeates presided and conducted.

Remark by Bishop Yeates:

My Brothers and Sisters and friends - we have assembled today to pay tribute to John F. Astle. It is gratifying to me, as a bishop, to see so many people here.

Brother Astle was born 82 years ago in Montpelier, Idaho. He was a pioneer of that country and also of Star Valley country. He married Laretta Hepworth, September 9, 1891. She bore him 13 children. She died December 24, 1918. On March 30, 1927, he married Clara Steen, his present wife, who survives him, and six daughters and one son, David; also two foster sons and one foster daughter, children of Sister Clara.

The following program has been arranged by the family and will be carried out as follows:

Vocal Duet: "Jesus Lover of My Soul" - Elizabeth Thorpe & Pearl Rice  
Prayer: Bishop Preston Alder  
1st Speaker: Bishop Leon Alder  
Vocal Solo: "In the Garden" - Luella Jensen  
2nd Speaker: Brother William Zollinger  
Vocal Solo: "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go, Dear Lord" - John Spuhler  
3rd Speaker: Brother George Dutson  
Remarks: Bishop Eugene Yeates  
Vocal Duet: "Oh My Father" - Elizabeth Thorpe & Pearl Rice  
Prayer: President George A. Raymond

Prayer in the home was offered by Bishop Newell Cahoon of the Logan Fourth Ward.

Vocal Duet – "Jesus Lover of My Soul" - Elizabeth Thorpe & Pearl Rice:

*Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly;  
While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high;  
Hide me, O my Savior, hid, till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide, oh, receive my soul at last.*

*Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee;  
Leave, oh, leave me not alone, still support and comfort me;  
All my trust on thee is stayed; all my help from thee I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head, with the shadow of thy wing;*

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in Thee I find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
Just and holy is Thy name, I am all unrighteousness;  
Vile and full of sin I am, Thou art full of truth and grace.*

Opening Prayer - Bishop Preston Alder:

Our Heavenly Father: We have met here this beautiful afternoon to pay tribute to one of Thy noble servants who has departed this life, Brother John Astle. Our Father, we know that Thou knowest the integrity, the faith and the devotion of this fine man. Thou knowest that he has spent many years in Thy service as a great missionary, carrying a message of truth to the people of the world and also to the members of Thy church. We know that Thou knowest of the great many contributions he has made in a financial way in the building up of Thy kingdom — of the many things that he has done to bring comfort and joy and beauty to the souls of men.

Heavenly Father, we appreciate the great services which we, as Thy children, participate in. We humbly pray, on this occasion, that Thy Spirit may be in attendance with us; that it may lead and direct the minds of those who may speak, and the testimony of his life that they reveal unto us, and strengthen our own testimony.

Heavenly Father, we know that Thou knowest in this man there was no guile — that he has been a true and faithful servant and raised a large family and taught them the principles and the truths and that these truths have been taught, in turn, to his grandchildren, of which he has many, and they are a great credit to him and to the people of this great church and this great nation.

Heavenly Father, we pray that Thou will bless those who are rendering music, that they may be able to do so in a pleasing way. Help us, at all times, that we may appreciate these many beautiful numbers that they have to offer us. We pray that Thou will bless those who mourn at this time, especially Sister Astle, who has been a devoted wife in the declining years of this, Thy servant. Cheer and comfort her and bless her with health and strength, that her years may be full of joy and happiness. And bless the children and grandchildren, that they may have the desire to continue on in the beautiful teachings of their father and grandfather. Bless all whom we should pray for at this time. We thank Thee for the life of this man and for the things that he has done for our country, and we do it in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Speaker - Bishop Leon Alder:

My dear Brothers and Sisters - I assure you that I feel my weakness very keenly, in standing before you this afternoon. I will try to fill the position that was asked of me by Brother David Astle, on behalf of the family, that I might say a few words on this occasion. I sincerely hope, my Brothers and Sisters, that the prayer that has been offered, will be answered in my behalf, that I may be able to call to mind the thoughts that have entered my mind since hearing of the illness and passing of our friend here in Providence, Brother John Astle.

It has been my pleasure to be acquainted with Brother Astle and his good family since they moved into our community and our ward. My father and Brother Astle were great friends. They had a good many things in common, but the greatest and best thing to them was the Gospel of Jesus Christ and they worked together on a good many committees and served as Home Missionaries together here for a number of years, in the Logan Stake. They visited together very

often in the declining years of my father and mother and we appreciated it very much. I remember the time when they moved into our community and took their place here. They bought the George Hansen property in the other end of town, and Brother Astle became interested in raising foxes for fur and also in poultry raising and taking care of a small farm. He soon became acquainted here and was willing to work in all capacities. We soon found he was a church-goer and a church-lover; He was not afraid to stick up for anything that was good. Of course, a man of that caliber will surely be thought a great deal of in a community.

We all know Brother Astle's main hobby or main thought, was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and he taught us a great many things of importance concerning that Church. Brother Astle was not a fluent speaker when he got up to speak, but he had a wonderful memory and he could back up his statements by verses in the Bible, which he used many times. I sometimes envied him in this trait. Brother Astle was a truthful man, he loved the truth and I can truthfully say that he was an honest man and that is saying a great deal among men of the world. He loved truth, honesty and integrity and willingness to work in all vocations of life. I know he was honest with men and with God.

While I had the pleasure of serving as Bishop, I became well acquainted with brother Astle. When he came to pay his tithing, he paid an honest tithe. When he wasn't doing so well with his furs and poultry, it made him feel very badly because he couldn't pay as much tithing as he had the years before, when he was doing better. He said the Lord expects a tenth of our earnings. I can't pay as much this year as last, we will be blessed for it - and I am sure he was blessed.

We did not have the pleasure of meeting his good wife, the mother of this wonderful family, as her passing was before they made their home in Providence, but I am sure she was a wonderful mother to bring up as fine a family as she and Brother Astle did. After she died, Brother Astle carried on and gave his children every advantage that he could afford, and taught them integrity, truthfulness and the principles of the Gospel as well as he taught everyone he met, by everything he did, because he was honest in his convictions and straightforward in his dealings.

We learned to love the Astle's and when he brought Sister Astle to live here as his wife, we were all very happy to make her acquaintance and she was very helpful in our ward. I am sure she will gain her reward in the life hereafter for the things that she had done for Brother Astle. When they decided to move from Providence, Brother Astle felt that he would like to do something for our community and for us to remember him by, so he consulted with Bishop Zollinger about what he could do and what he could leave here. They finally decided he would leave this beautiful mural as a gift. He hired one of the painters from the college, Everett Thorpe, and they, together, worked out this beautiful scene which is a part of Providence and the mountains above it. They went below our town and drew a sketch. Brother Astle paid for it and presented it to the ward and we will always remember the Astle family by it.

I had one other thing in common with Brother Astle. During our conversations, we found that our birthdays were the same day and the same month. Brother Astle recently reminded me of this. He expressed his appreciation for being born on that day of that month, the 21<sup>st</sup> of September. He said to me, "I think it is a privilege to be born on such a wonderful day — the day the Angel Moroni visited the Prophet Joseph Smith." He was sincerely thankful that he

could come into this world and do the thing that nature required of him.

I am sure that brother Astle was received very heartily and that he had many friends waiting for him on the other side. As was mentioned in the prayer, he spent many years teaching the Gospel in this life. I think he loved the Gospel when he was a boy because of the character of the man. I only urge and pray that we all prepare ourselves, that we might live lives such as this man, who has just left us, has lived — pure, simple, full of work, full of those things that are good — good for everyone, and I hope the children and the grandchildren will always look back on their father and grandfather with pleasure, to think they had such a wonderful man and to emulate his example in everything they do. I hope we can all profit by the things that Brother and Sister Astle have said and done and I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Vocal Solo - "*In the Garden*" - Luella Jensen:

*I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses;  
And the voice I hear falling on my ear; the Son of God discloses;  
And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own:  
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

*He speaks and the sound of His voice, is so sweet the birds hush their singing;  
And the melody that He gave to me, within my heart is ringing;  
And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own:  
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

*I'd stay in the Garden with Him tho' the night around me, be falling;  
But He bids me go, thru the voice of woe, His voice to me is calling;  
And He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

Speaker - Brother William Zollinger:

My Brothers and Sisters - I deem this an honor and a privilege, to speak here to the funeral of Brother Astle, a man whom I have known since he came to Providence to live. I do not know any man whom I esteem more highly and am more proud to have known. He was a solid man. When he put his foot down, it stayed. He was a pioneer in building the Church in Star Valley as well as here. I think our ward was very fortunate when he came here to stay, because of the many services he did. Anything he put his hand to, he did well. He wanted everything done the very best. As mentioned by Brother Alder, he was a man who loved the truth and the Gospel — that was his whole life. A man who filled three missions, could not help but have a great faith.

So, the life of Brother Astle was one of encouragement and faith and anyone who got acquainted with him found his council sound. I found him to be a man of integrity and good works, in my experience with him. I worked with him time and time again in the ward, in the genealogical work and the teachers work and in the High Priests, etc. All these things in which he worked, he did the best he could and was a great help. Any time I met him I enjoyed talking to him — he had very much the same ideas as I had. When he spoke of the Gospel, he told me many times he

would like to spend all the days of his life preaching the Gospel and to have his children engaged in the work of the Lord.

When he lived here, he was engaged in the production of furs, very much above the average. Everything he did had to be the best. When he got along in years and couldn't get help, he decided to close out his business and soon afterwards he moved to Logan. He didn't really want to move from Providence and debated a long time before doing so. It's a hard matter, you know, to transplant old people to a new environment. My father moved to Logan, but never felt at home. Young people can transplant themselves, but not older people.

Brother Astle had the desire to spend his last days in the Temple. He went there when he could hardly walk but he desired to spend his last days there and very nearly did. He said, "I feel much better in the Temple than anywhere else. Anyone who goes there cannot help but feel better." Almost the last day of his life he was there, engaged in that work. I enjoyed my association with him and Sister Astle. I don't know of anyone I have a higher regard for than her and her children. When I look back and think that his wife died and left him with children, I can see what a trial that was for Brother Astle. He had to raise and take care of his family alone, out in that section of the Star Valley country. We can see many people left like that and it is an awful trial to go through, but Brother Astle weathered the storm and finally moved down here and married Sister Astle and had many good years here. Anything he put his hand to, he would see that it was done right. He was a great builder, a man who loved to do things right.

He was a contributor to the publishing of our history of our town and donated liberally to that. Whenever I come into this building, my eyes feast on this painting and in that I see Brother Astle, and my children and their children, when they come into this building, will see there the character of Brother Astle — a builder and a colonizer. I do not know of anything that Brother Astle could have done that would have given everyone more enjoyment and so we will always remember Brother Astle for his character and his part in our community.

I do not know how he went to the Temple so much. He knew that he would meet his ancestors on the other side and some of the people he had done work for in the Temple, and nothing could be more pleasing to anyone than to know you would meet everyone on the other side. His children are doing the same thing and so I am sure he is happy today with his former wife and children who passed on, and other friend. There is certain to be a happy reunion. He could go there with a clear conscience, with having done all he could for those who have gone on. We are not only here today, we must work for those who have gone on, who could not do for themselves what we can do today. Many did not know of the Gospel, never had the Priesthood, nor the chance to work for themselves. And so, we have to do the work for them as Brother Astle has and I know his satisfaction will be complete.

I remember my father saying that he once had a vision. He saw hundreds and thousands of his relatives in the spirit world and they were having a great jubilee when my father would come over into the spirit world and they were happy and rejoicing in the work that he had done for them in the Temple.

I trust, my Brothers and Sisters, that we will all emulate the example shown us by the good life

of Brother Astle. I learned to love him for his faith and integrity. May God bless his children and his wife, that they may do their best to carry on the work that Brother Astle started is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Vocal Solo - "*I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go*" - John Spuhler:

*It may not be on the mountain's high, or over the stormy sea;  
It may not be at the battle's front my Lord will have need of me;  
But if, by a still small, voice He calls to paths that I do not know;  
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine, I'll go where you want me to go.*

*I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain, or plain, or sea;  
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord, I'll be what you want me to be.*

*Perhaps today there are loving words which Jesus would have me speak;  
There may be now in the paths of sin some wand'rer whom I should seek;  
O Savior, if Thou wilt be my guide, tho dark and rugged the way;  
My voice shall echo the message sweet, I'll say what you want me to say.*

*I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain, or plain, or sea;  
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord, I'll be what you want me to be.*

*There's surely somewhere a lowly place, in earth's harvest fields so wide;  
Where I may labor through life's short day for Jesus, the Crucified;  
So trusting my all to Thy tender care, and knowing Thou lovest me;  
I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere, I'll be what you want me to be.*

*I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain, or plain, or sea;  
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord, I'll be what you want me to be.*

Speaker - Brother George Dutson:

My dear Brothers and Sisters and family of Brother Astle. I hope that I can control my feelings while I stand before you. I am grateful for the opportunity that came to me Sunday, when my cousin called me up and asked me if I wouldn't like to visit Brother Astle, for a while. I am grateful that he mentioned it and that I went. We had a nice day. We had a time of rejoicing.

Eighty years ago the 21 st of September, Brother Astle entered mortality. I would not be surprised if many of us were there on the other side to bid him Godspeed when he came down here to earth to this mortal life. There was great rejoicing here when he arrived.

I knew his father and mother — I sometimes am choked down ----- When we moved into Star Valley the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1901, we took a bunch of cattle with us. As we passed Brother Astle's home, he was standing on the highway and greeted us and talked to us there. I was a lad of 17 years, small for my age, for some reason or other. My brothers are all six feet and more in height. I kept growing until I was 21 years of age. I am grateful I met Brother Astle there on the

highway. The following Sunday we attended Sunday School and Brother Astle was there. He was the superintendent of the Sunday School and he and his family were always in attendance. He would get up at 4 o'clock Sunday morning to get his chores done. He had a bunch of cows to milk but his children helped him. He was always at the chapel ten or fifteen minutes before time to take up Sunday School. I believe he did as much, or more, for me than my own father did — teaching me the Gospel, telling me the importance of keeping myself clean. He seemed to pay special attention to me. I was a backward boy and did not take part in the Church. Still he helped me to bring myself out of that. Fifty years of knowing a wonderful man. Seventeen years we lived in Grover and met him every day. He always had a stimulant to give to young people — He showed them the importance of living the Gospel and keeping ourselves clean and unspotted from the sins of the world.

He asked me to go with him to hold a cottage meeting and I was glad I did. I learned things from Brother Astle that I never shall forget as long as I am honoring my membership in the Church and my Priesthood.

Some time back I met Brother Astle and I said to him, "Brother Astle, when I pass from this world I want you to be my first speaker." He said, "Brother George, if I go first, I want you to say a few words at my funeral," and here I am. There was for some time that we thought he would have the opportunity of saying something at my funeral, but my time had not come. I am glad they gave me a little more time here. The accident that I am just recovering from, took its toll from me. I have nervous spells come on me, but I have a testimony of the Gospel that is the power that helps me until the day I die. I know that they are having a reception for Brother Astle — a family reunion in the spirit world — they are rejoicing that he is joining them, and it will be a happy reunion. You dear children keep in mind the teachings of your dear father and mother.

I was thinking the other day since visiting Brother Astle in his home, of the old people, and there are not many left that I knew when I was a young man. They have departed one by one to the other side. When I was visiting Brother Astle Sunday, I almost made mention to him that when he got over there, to find my parents, my wife, my two sons, my brothers and sisters and tell them that George is striving to keep the commandments of the Lord, striving to accomplish the mission for which he came here upon the earth to perform, but I could not say it. I was afraid it would worry him, but I did have the privilege of laying my hands upon his head and giving him a comforting blessing, for which I am very thankful. He said he rejoiced in every word I said. It is not for sorrow my tears are flowing, it is because I am rejoicing in the thought of the work he is engaged in. His life was filled up with usefulness. Everyone loved Brother and Sister Astle and the whole family — a wonderful family. It seemed that Brother Astle had a way of watching people and giving them encouragement and help, and I humbly pray that our Father in Heaven will be with his children, that they will all love the truth — love the Gospel. This salvation is a wonderful thing to strive for. I might mention that I hope, when my time comes, to go where Brother Astle has gone so as to be in good company, and I rejoice to say that one of his brothers married my sister in the temple. I rejoice dear friends, in the mission of life and I never can find words to express my gratitude for what this dear Brother has done for me, instilling in my soul the love of the Gospel. It is through him that I became active in the church, and I do appreciate beyond words to express, the honor that came to me today, to say a few words here. Since I was notified of this, I have not had much sleep, thinking and praying that I may be able to say

something that would encourage the family. I hope that, the time will soon come when I can join him over in that wonderful place, and that I will always be as faithful and prepared as Brother Astle was.

I pray that the Lord will bless Sister Astle and the family, that they will always keep in mind the Gospel. May peace be with each and give them comfort. I will venture to say, do not be surprised if Brother Astle visits you sometime, maybe soon, to give you encouragement. I have been visited by my father at times, and given encouragement. My wife, who has departed, has come to me several times to give me counsel and advice. Her voice is just the same as it was before she left this mortal life. It is wonderful, Brothers and Sisters, to be a member of this church, the only true church on the face of the earth. I believe the story of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know that it is true. I know that my Redeemer lives, God lives and Jesus is the Son of the living God. It is wonderful, Brothers and Sisters, to have a testimony burning within your soul that the Gospel is true and that there is a responsibility resting upon us to live it so that we can have Eternal Life. May this be our happy lot for each and every one, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Remark - Bishop Eugene Yeates:

My Brothers and Sisters - from the standpoint of a Latter-day Saint I do not think I have ever heard finer tributes paid than have been paid today. I have known Brother Astle for thirty years. I worked in the bank where he did his business and got well acquainted with him. I have observed him all through the years as a High Councilman — for ten years in Logan Stake. I met him on many occasions and I observed his friendliness and humbleness and faith and devotion; his kindness and appreciation to his friends and family. He has been an asset to society, never a liability and he has left a fine heritage. When I look into the faces of his son and daughters, I look at people who have the conviction of the truth of the passage, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and righteousness, and all else will follow."

The past year Brother Astle lived in my ward and as Bishop, I visited them several times. He loved the Priesthood of God and when I went into his home, I am sure he appreciated it because he honored the Priesthood and respected the men at the head of the ward and stake. I learned there to appreciate his good wife, Clara, because she was so devoted to him and kind and helped him in every way. When they came out to Church, she was so careful to help him. Since he had that sick spell a year ago, he could not get around so well and she helped him so much. I know the Lord will bless her for it. Brother Astle spent nine years out in the world as a missionary and David spent time in the mission field and at the present time, he has five grandchildren on foreign missions and two in the armed forces. They are following in the footsteps of their grandfather and he has set a wonderful example. May God bless his wife and children, that they may emulate his example.

On behalf of the family, I wish to express thanks and gratification to all who have taken part today and who have helped during the sickness and passing of Brother Astle. Also for the floral offerings and kindnesses that have been extended to them. May God bless them and go with them to Grover Ward, where there will be services and he will be interned tomorrow afternoon. May God's blessings go with them I pray in Jesus name, Amen.



Vocal Duet - "O My Father" - Elizabeth Thorpe & Pearl Rice:

*O my Father, Thou, that dwellest in the high and glorious place;  
When shall I regain Thy presence and again behold Thy face?  
In Thy holy habitation, did my spirit once reside?  
In my first primeval childhood was I nurtured near Thy side?*

*For a wise and glorious purpose Thou hast placed me here on earth;  
And withheld the recollection of my former friends and birth;  
Yet oft times a secret something whispered, "You're a stranger here;"  
And I felt that I had wandered from a more exalted sphere.*

*I had learned to call Thee Father, thru Thy spirit from on high;  
But, until the Key of Knowledge was restored, I knew not why;  
In the heav'ns are parents single? No, the thought makes reason stare!  
Truth is reason, truth eternal, tells me I've a Mother there.*

*When I leave this frail existence, when I lay this mortal by;  
Father, Mother, may I meet you in your royal courts on high?  
Then, at length, when I've completed all you sent me forth to do;  
With your mutual approbation let me come and dwell with you.*

Benediction - President George A. Raymond:

Our Father who art in Heaven, at the close of this beautiful service, we, with grateful hearts, thank Thee for the spirit that has abided during this service. We are thankful, our Father for the words that have been spoken relative to the character and integrity of this man. We thank Thee for the encouragement that we have taken from the life of this man and the reward that he is assured according to the obedience to Thy commandments, that we will all be led back into Thy presence. Father in Heaven, we are thankful for the promises that Thou has given us. We know Heavenly Father, that Brother Astle has gone to that reward and that he will be called to preside over his great posterity and that he will be a king in that kingdom. Father in Heaven, we pray again that Thou wilt be with his wife and children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters. Let Thy comforting presence be with them, Heavenly Father, and make up to them for their loss, because indeed, their father and grandfather has gone to a rich reward. Father, now we ask Thee to bless us, grant Thy spirit to be with those who go to the other valley, that they go in peace and that we will all be blessed continually for our obedience to Thy principles and bless us that we may emulate the example that has been set by this Thy servant. Praying that Thou will be with us and give us encouragement and faith to go on, we humbly ask in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.