cannot permit itself to indulge in any such wide range of review, or great latitude of construction.

When a decision is adduced as a precedent, affording evidence and illustration of the principles of equity, which it is urged should govern a new case, then under consideration, unless the rule be unambiguous and clear, it is certainly fit and proper to attend to all the circumstances upon which it is founded; and also to understand the reasons and arguments by which the mind of the Court was brought to the conclusion which has been recorded as its judgment. Because in such instances the only object is to ascertain what is the law applicable to the case under consideration, which law does not consist in particular cases; but in general principles which run through and govern them. The principle is the thing which is to be extracted from cases, and to be applied to other cases. *Rust* v. *Cooper*, *Cowp.* 633; *Walpole* v. *Cholmondely*, 7 *T. R.* 148; *Browning* v. *Wright*, 2 *Boz. and Pul.* 24; *Silk* v. *Prime*, 1 *Bro. C. C.* 138, *n; Perry* v. *Whitehead*, 6 *Ves.* 54; *Morgan* v. *Morgan*, 5 *Mad.* 410.

24 * Here, however, this Court has been entirely precluded from any such inquiry. The law of this case has been pronounced by the tribunal in the last resort; and it has been returned to this Court with special directions as to the mode in which that law is to be carried into effect. *Interest reipublicæ res judicates non rescindi.* It is, therefore, now wholly unimportant, as regards the matter under consideration, what was the nature of the case on which the decree of the Court of Appeals was founded; or what were the reasons which induced that Court to give the directions it has done; since it is not the reason, or applicability of the law, so laid down, which is in any manner the subject of consideration at this time; but simply in what mode the directions given for executing an unalterable judgment can be most correctly and effectually complied with. Litigation must end somewhere. It is certain, that this Court cannot, in any one particular, however unimportant, revise, correct, or alter, any order or decree of the Court of Appeals; and it is questionable, whether even that Court itself, confined as it is, by the express provisions of the Constitution, to the exercise of none other than a specified degree of appellate power over the decisions of the tribunals of original jurisdiction, can, after the close of the term at which its decree has been passed, grant a rehearing or bill of review for any cause whatever. 1804, ch. 55, s. 5; *Barbon* v. *Searle*, 1 *Vern.* 416; *Penn* v. *Baltimore*, 1 *Ves.* 455; *Perry* v. *Whitehead*, 6 *Ves.* 547; *Willan* v. *Willan*, 16 *Ves.* 89; *Murray* v. *Coster*, 20 *John. Rep.* 603; *White* v. *Atkinson*, 3 *Call.* 376; *Campbell* v. *Price*, 3 *Mun.* 227; *Burn* v. *Posug*, 3 *Desau.* 614; *McCormick* v. *Sullivant*, 10 *Wheat.* 199; *Vattel*, *b.* 1, *ch.* 13, *s.* 165.