accordingly. Thus, to each point P in the space there corresponds an ordered triplet (x, y, z) of real numbers.

Conversely, given any triplet (x, y, z), we would first fix the point L on the x-axis corresponding to x, then locate the point M in the XY-plane such that (x, y) are the coordinates of the point M in the XY-plane. Note that LM is perpendicular to the x-axis or is parallel to the y-axis. Having reached the point M, we draw a perpendicular MP to the XY-plane and locate on it the point P corresponding to z. The point P so obtained has then the coordinates (x, y, z). Thus, there is a one to one correspondence between the points in space and ordered triplet (x, y, z) of real numbers.

Alternatively, through the point P in the space, we draw three planes parallel to the coordinate planes, meeting the x-axis, y-axis and z-axis in the points A, B and C, respectively (Fig 11.3). Let OA = x, OB = y and OC = z. Then, the point P will have the coordinates x, y and z and we write P (x, y, z). Conversely, given x, y and z, we locate the three points A, B and C on the three coordinate axes. Through the points A, B and C we draw planes parallel to the YZ-plane, ZX-plane and XY-plane, respectively. The point of interesection of these three planes, namely, ADPF, BDPE and CEPF is obviously the point P, corresponding to the ordered triplet (x, y, z). We observe that if P (x, y, z) is any point in the space, then x, y and z are perpendicular distances from YZ, ZX and XY planes, respectively.

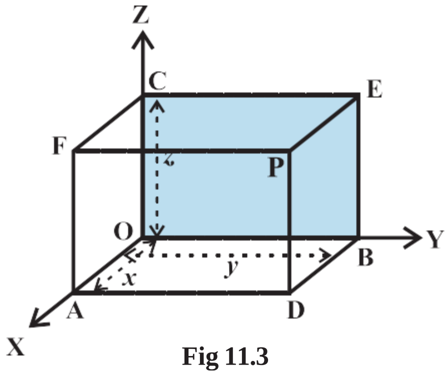

Fig 11.3

Remark The sign of the coordinates of a point determine the octant in which the point lies. The following table shows the signs of the coordinates in eight octants.

Table 11.1

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
x	+	–	–	+	+	–	–	+
y	+	+	–	–	+	+	–	–
z	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–