Question 9 (10 marks)

How useful would Sources E and F be for a historian studying the different goals of Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson in creating the Treaty of Versailles?

In your answer, consider the perspectives provided by the TWO sources and the reliability of each one.

Both Sources E & F would be useful in studying the different goals of the Big Three: Clemenceau, Lloyd George & Wilson, however they are limited in their usefulness.

Source E is a letter from a member of the US delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. The fact that he was actually there gives the source credibility. However, because we are not aware of who the letter was intended for, this source should be approached critically.

Source F highlights the stubborn attitude of all three leaders, which is useful. Indeed, we also consider the controversial issue of reparations. Source F claims that Wilson contended in setting fixed reparations, contrary to Clemenceau’s idea of fluctuations in the value of the currency. Source E also states, rather than elaboration, that Lloyd George thought it best to be lenient on Germany. This information indeed makes Source E useful.
Source F is an extract from a book by Lloyd George himself and as such it is unlikely to portray him in a negative light which brings its reliability into question. However, as one of the three main leaders, he most likely had access to a great deal of accurate information concerning the subject in addition to being a first-hand witness. Lloyd George highlights the pressure of public opinion that Clemenceau in particular had to accommodate as it was France that had been torn apart by trench warfare. While the French population had reacted with revenge, Source F also examines the disputes over territory such as the Rhineland and the Saar yet desires to promote their outcomes. The post-World War I French felt the Rhineland did not and was instead demilitarised. Lloyd George, like Clemenceau also acknowledges the French push for harsh reparations which emphasises its unreasonable nature that again arose from revanchism. When studied together, Sources E and F are particularly useful in terms of evaluating the goals of Clemenceau, however, they fail to provide a clear picture of Lloyd George's goals other than the moderating French demands. There is no mention of Wilson's Fourteen Points and the use of these sources in no way impacts the conclusion drawn from the sources.

End of Question 9